

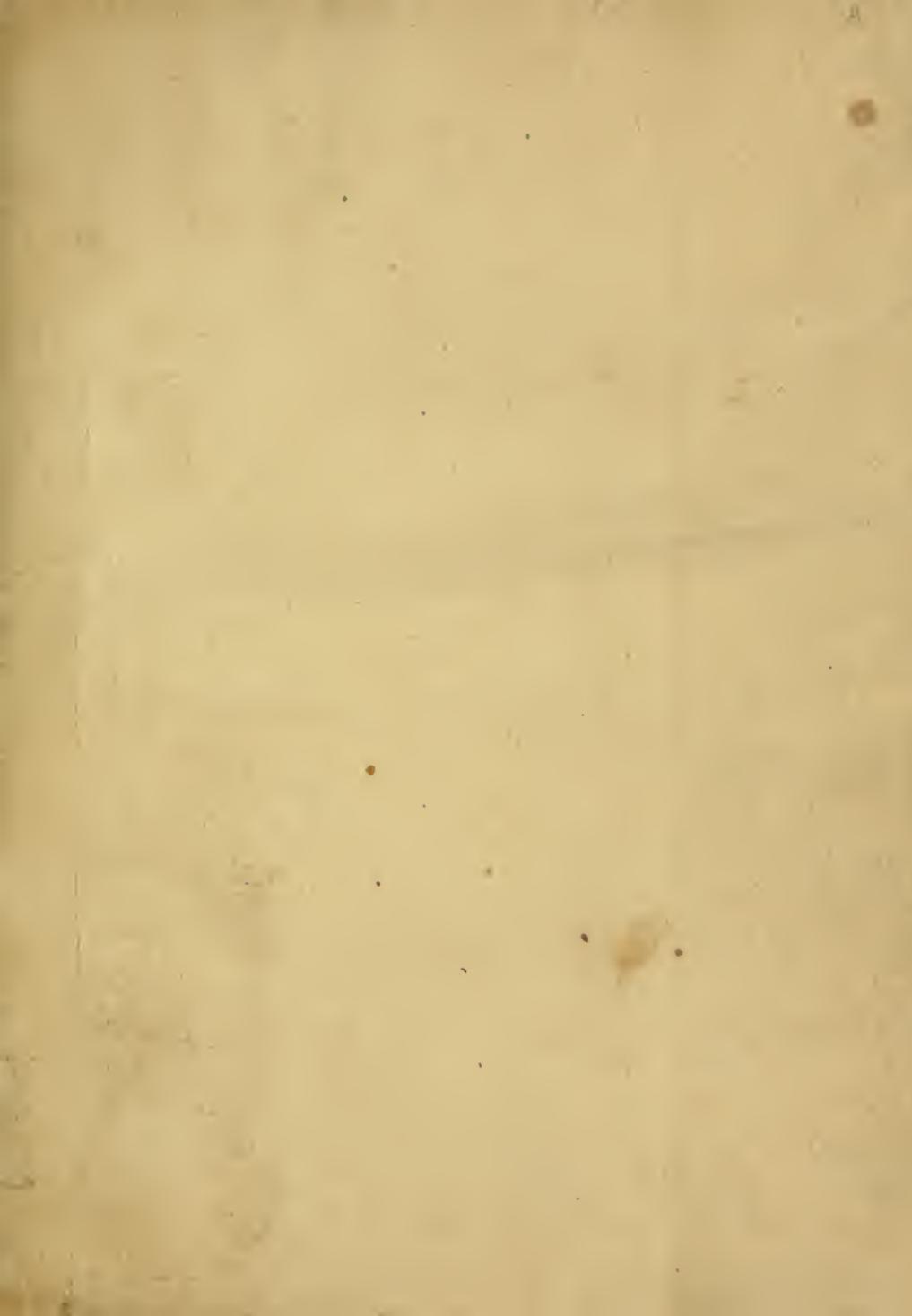
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THE SAINTS ADVANTAGE:

^{O R}
THE VVELL-FARE OF
THE FAITHVLL, IN THE
WORST TIMES.

A Sermon,

Preached at the Hage the 18. of May,

Before the most High, and Mighty Princesse,

ELIZABETH, by the Grace of GOD,

Queene of Bohemia, Countesse Palatine of

the Rhene, Dutches of Bavaria, &c.

And onely Daughter to our Sov-
raigne Lord King IAMES.

By I OHN W I N G, an vnworthy Minister of the Gos-
pell, and Pastour to the English Church at Flushing
in ZEALAND.

2 Cor. 1. 3. 4.

3. Blessed be God the Father of our Lord Iesus Christ, the Father
of mercies, and God of all consolation.

4. Who comforteth vs in our tribulation, that we may be able to
comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort where-
with we our selves are comforted of God.

L O N D O N,

Printed by Iohn Dawson for Iohn Bellamie, and are to be
sold at his Shop at the three Golden Lyons, neare the
Royall Exchange, 1624.

A. 3.



T O
**THE MOST, HIGH,
AND MIGHTIE PRINCESSE,**

ELIZABETH, by the grace of GOD,

Countesse Palatine of the Rhene, &c.

JOHN WING, Pastour of the English Church at
Flushing in Zealand, wisheth all encrease of grace, and peace,
and whatsoever may enlarge all present happines on earth,
and assure that which is eternall in heaven.

MOSt GRACIOVS PRINCESSE,



Nasmuch as it pleased
your most excellent Ma-
iestie, to vouchsafe a Grac-
cious eare to the weake vt-
terance of these Medita-
tions, I am comfortably
encouraged to present a

more compleate discovery of them, to your
Princeley eyes, not that I account them worthy
(as they are mine) of the least looke of Maiestie ;
but trusting wholy to that clemency and favour,
which I humbly entreat, may shine from you,
vpon this my poore endevour ; it having (next
to the honour of the most high God) her one-

ly respect, and ayme, at your *Maiesties* present, and future condition ; a true *type* whereof, is here tendered by him, whose soule doth daily sue vnto the *King of Kings*, that as he hath measured vnto, (and you haue shared with,) *Moses*, and *David*, many tribulations in the entrance of their honour, and renowne, and after made them so much the more *famous*, *admired*, and *victorios* : So it, might please the same Lord to alot you the sweete happinesse of *their* issue, which was most blessed and glorious ; to alay the distaste of that bitter beginning, which (vnto nature) seemeth somewhat tarte, and grievous ; and together with that peerelesse greatnessse which they enjoyed on earth ; the same glory and joy, which they possesse in heaven. The *Great GOD* of heaven and earth blesse, with the richest abundance, and combination of his rarest, and best blessings, your *Royall Head*, and *Husband* ; your *Highnesse*, all your hopefull *Plants*, and *Princely posteritie*, that your *Crowne* may yet flourish, your enemies may ever perish, and you all, may be made *mirrours of Maiestie*, and *Royaltie*, to all Generations.

*Your MAIES TIES in all
dutie to be commanded,*

JOHN WING.



I
TO THE
RIGHT WORSHIPFVLL,
And most worthy Gentlemen,

Sir Francis Barrington, Sir Thomas Barrington, and Sir William Massam,
Knights, and to their vertuous
LADIES.

JOHN WING, Wisheth all continuance, and encrease of temporall happinesse on earth, which
may assure, and further, that which is
eternall in the Heavens.

Right Worshipfull, and Right well-beloved,

I T is now some good space of time since
God gaue me the happiness, and opportunitie, to be made knywne vnto you, and
from time to come, to taste, and receiue
those fruits of your favour and loue;
which howsever, I leaue to the Lord (out of his loue) for a
full recompence of reward, to be given vnto every of you,
in due time; yet, I could not but out of my dutie so acknow-

ledge the same, as I might both make knowne your worthy examples for others to imitate, and trace, in these dead and vnworthy times ; and also give evidence to your selues, of my true and vnfayned thankfulness, so deepeley engraven, as no distance of place, or durance of time, (I hope) shall ever be able to abolish. Receiue I beseech you all, this myte, as the moddell of my hearts desire towards you, and of your estate with that God, who having enriched you with that glorious Advantage, and Prerogatiue, to be called his Saints, will so over-rule all evills, incident to his, that their very damages, shall become matter of

1 Tim. 6. gaine and advantage. He who hath sayd [Godlinesse 6. is gaine, [and shewed the powerfull perwasion thereof, Phil. 3. 7. in their practise, who haue accounted the things that 8. were gaine vnto them, losse and dung for Christ, I make you in Christ, happy gainers, by your grace, and godlinesse, with the happiest of his owne, vnder heauen, for the present, during your pilgrimage here ; and in heauen, in full possession for ever, and ever. To his grace I commend you all, and all that are yours ; daily desiring you may be partakers of his glory through him, who was Rev. 1. 18. dead, and is aliue, and beholde he liueth for evermore, in whom I rest ever

Yours to my vtmost,
for any service.

JOHN WING.



To the Christian Reader.

BEloved in the Lord, seeing promise is debt, and performance alone the onely discharge that can gaine plenary satisfaction; I must (at present) deale as poore debtors oft-times are enforced, to pray where they cannot pay, and to entreat yet longer time, for that which was due long a-goe. It is neere foure yeares, since I began to engage my selfe unto thee, for the perfecting of my Matrimoniall Treatise, then (in part) published. To this day, I confesse I haue not finished the same, for I met with such cumbrance, hinderance, and inconvenience, in that little, which was but as a Preface to the rest, that I durst not adventure to set upon the remainder, being the farre greater part. Yet, I am not out of all hope, ere long to doe it; and in the meane time, I thought good to send this Sermon abroad, wherein I haue endeavoured the cure, of one of the most common sores, that hath come to my observation in these evill times; to wit, the hard conceit, that not onely the vngodly doe harbour of Gods people, but they of themselues, especially if outward things goe hard with them, and the times doe not favour, but distaste, and frowne upon them. Beholde here, a man that was taught of God, to know so much of the very meanest estate of the members of Christ, that he willingly left to be mightie in the world, to make one among them in their meanenesse, and misery; and by his practise made it manifest, that his perswasion was quite contrary to the base opinion of men, touching the Saints of God. And if he were led unto this excellent estimation

tion by extraordinary inspiration from God, is it not extraordinary impietie, to thinke or speake otherwise of them? Surely, so farre as God did informe the one, Satan doth insatuate the other. Reade and ponder the particulars, and pray to that God for me, to whom I am, and shall be a suiter for thee, for thy present, and future well-fare.

Farewell in the Lord,
in whom I am thine.

JOHN WING.

THE
S A I N T S
ADVANTAGE:

O R

The well-fare of the Faithfull, in the
Worst Times.

HEB R. II. 26.

*Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than
the treasures in Egypt.*



T is not much materiall vnto vs, neither will it be worth our time and labour, to looke after the *Writer* of this *Epistle*, seeing it is past question, that the *holy Ghost* was the *Author* of the same. And therfore we will not trouble our selues, or you, with any needlessle and fruitlesse search, what man of *God* it might be that penned it, seeing we are throughly perswaded that *God* him-selfe inspired it; who having great abundance and varietie of divine *Secretaryes*, might employ whoni he pleased.

B. in

in this service, and yet not be pleased to tell vs wⁿc it was, whom he did employ in the same. It is not the less canonickall, or authentike, because we cannot tell who wrote it: the matter of it is known to be gods, though no name of any man of God, be prefixed therevnto. The which, since the Lord in great wisedome hath concealed, how can we without grosse folly endeavour to discover it? he having thought good to hide it, it must be thought evill in vs to make enquierie after it.

What; cannot a good message of glad tydings be welcome from our best friend, vnlesse wee may know the messengers name that brought it? Or shall not a Patent (from the King) contayning matter of profit, or preferment; or a Pardon of some foule fact, bee accepted and beleeved, if withall we may not be certified (by name) which of the *Secretaries of State* did write it? would not all the world censure it for vnreasonable absurdity, absurd incivility, yea, and for most vncivill, and insufferable insolency, if a man should stand vpon these teatmes with his *bettters*, and thus refuse the meanes of his welfare? were not such a one well worthy to bee wofull, for want of that which he so *unworthily* refused? And if thus it be, in these temporall occurrents, which can concerne but our present externall advantage, it must of necessity bee so much the more evill, and intollerable, in these spirituall affayres, by how much in them, we haue to do with him, whose excellency and glory doth surmount all mens; and in those passages, which both in their owne nature, and in their consequence to vs, doe infinitely and incomparably exceede, all the benefits of this present life, as being concerning the eternall, and inconceivable happines of our whole man for ever and euer in the heavens.

Had any important point of holy information depended

ded vpon the notice of the *Pen-man* of this part of scripture, we should assuredly haue knowne who he had bin, for we haue great reason to beleue that our good God would not haue withholden any good thing from vs: we may therefore wel conclude that nothing could be gotten by it, seeing the *most wise* God will not let vs know it; and what idle and senselesse busi-bodies are we then, to make our selues such worthles & vnprofitable worke, as will not pay for the time which is spent about it, nor ycelde any advantage, if it were finished, and the *Writer* revealed.

The more are men to be blamed, (*Divines* especially, and the *best* most of all), who make so much a-doe about this particular, as if the *authoritie*, or *nullitie* of this, *Epistle* lay vpon the *Writer*, rather then vpon the *Authour* of the same. It would weary and tyre any man, and make him to mourne in his very soule, to see how men of eminent excellency, and worthy parts, haue toyled in this *titular*, (I had almost sayd, *triviall*) businesse, disputed betweene *Papist* and *Papist*, betweene *Protestant* and *Papist*, yea, betweene *Protestant* and *Protestant*, as if it were a matter of more then words or names (as *Gallio* sayd), and of some mighty consequence, when as indeede it is not, neither hath any inference of any force or fruit annexed vnto it, whose name soever it beare.

Some will have it to bee *Pauls*, and for prooffe they pleade: first, The stile, and straine of it to be so like his, every where, that it must needs be *his owne* here: secondly, The close, or conclusion of this *Epistle* cap. 13. 25. being the same which *Paul* saith he saluted his friends, and shot vp all his *Epistles* withall: Thirdly, The authority of the *Apostle Peter* writing (as is thought) to the *Hebrewes* saying, 2. Pet. 3. 15. 16. that *Paul* had written to

them, and seemeth to point at this Epistle, because of the obscurity and difficulty of divers things therein: and together with these, divers other observable things are instanced, and urged in the body of the Epistle, (too long for vs now to relate) which make much probabilitie that *Paul* wrote it.

Some others againe will not haue it to be *Pauls*, but are perswaded some other holy man of God had the penning of it, and they plead: 1. That his name is not to it, whereas *Pauls* manner was to set his name to all that are vndoubtedly his: 2. That he, who wrote this Epistle seemeth not to haue had the matter therof immediately from God (which *Paul* evermore had) but mediately from some other, who heard it from *Christ*, as the words cap. 2. 1. 2. 3. doe import: together with some other likely passages which doe improoue *Pauls* penning of it.

And this *unnecessary controversie* hath cost much time, & paines, even among men of *great* learning and godlines, who yet I am perswaded, cannot but know, that neither the *Inscriptions*, nor *Subscriptions* of these Epistles which haue beeene written by severall *Apostles*, are, or can in any good reason be accounted *scripture*, considering how many iust exceptiōs may be alledged against sundry of both sorts, to make them mistrusted, and subject to vndeniable ambiguity, whereas all *Scripture* is absolutely infallible.

¶. 55. 2. How is it then that men lay out their money for that which is not bread? and take such paines for things that cannot profit? Summe vp all the *Items* urged of either side, what will the *Totall* amount vnto, but this, that inasmuch as some probability lyeth on either part, there is assurance on neither. Againe, admit and suppose it were sure on one side, either the *affirmative*, that it were *Pauls*, what are we the better, or the wiser in the way to heaven for the certaintie hereof? or on the *negative* that

it was none of *Pauls*, but that *Luke* (as some thinke) or *Barnabas*, or *Clement* (as others conceiue) did pen it, what holines or happines is wonne, when all this is done? surely none. The most that can come of the former is onely this, that we may call it [the Epistle of Paul to the Hebrewes] and put his name into our Copies, as it is in all others except one (as one observeth). The least that can come of the latter, is, that we leaue out *Pauls* name, and all names, and call it as we finde it [the Epistle to the Hebrewes] which title or inscription, being indifferent to either side, we will rest in the same as it is, without further contention or inquisition, seeing either *Pauls*, or any other name noted before, may be probably put in, and yet safely left out, let vs take it without any at all, and so proceed from the writer, to the matter contained in that which is written, especially in that little parcell which hath beene read, and in the revealing whereof, we intend (by Gods grace) to insist at this time.

And that we may the better come to comprehend what the will and mind of the Lord is therein, it shall be good to goe backe a little, to looke vpon the generall state of the whole Chapter, and to take such a view of the same, as may further vs in the particular of these words.

And what is this Chapter (being well considered) but a kinde of *summary* or *Abridgement*, of the olde Testament in that part thereof especially, which is *historicall*, and containeth the discovery of things done in matter of fact, by those most famous *Worthies* of the Lord, the eminency of whose faith, and excellencie of the fruits of the same, haue here a most glorious remembrance, being left vpō an everlasting record that cannot faile, but must and shall remayne to the blessed memoriall of those iust men, the tryall of whose faith having beene more precious than gold, shall be found vnto (the Lords, & their owne) Prov. 1 Pet. 1. 7.

praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearance of Jesus Christ.

Of which Worthies (both men and women) wee haue here a particular Catalogue, many of them being (by name) personallly expressed, from the beginning of the Chapter to the 33. verse: and others apparantly included (though not named) from thence to the end. And in this Catalogue it pleaseth the holy Ghost to keepe an excellente decorum, in an orderly and methodicall distribution of the persons, according to the times wherein they lived, and the Chronologie of the world, in the most famous Periods of the same vnder the olde Testament.

Vers. 14

It beginneth with righteous *Abell*, vers. 4. who lived not long after the Creation (being the second from *Adam*) and goeth on from him to *Enoch* the seaventh from *Adam* (as *Iude* call's him:) and from *Enoch* to *Noah*, and so finisheth the first famous period of the world, from the Creation, to the *Flood*; and beginnes the second from the *Flood* to *Abraham*, & the rest of those peereles Patriarchs, who lived after the *Flood*, and before the *Law* till *Moses*, who over-living them all, did finish the second famous period from the *Flood* to the giving of the *Law*, and made entrance into the third, from *Moses* and the *Law* given, to the time of the *Judges*: and so from thence-forward to the change of the civill government of the *Jewes*, from *Judges* to *Kings*: and vnder their *Kings*, both during the time of their settled and peaceable state, and also thence, vnto those interrupted and miserable dayes, wherein *Captivitie* prevayled; both at the first, in part, to their disturbance once, and againe for a time; and at the last to the totall and finall downe-fall and over-throw of that Nation, as touching any visible face, either of *civill*, or an *ecclesiasticall* estate.

Now

Now in this *Campe Royall*, of such as are here numbred, named, and made glorious by the notable fruits of their faith; some haue renowned themselues (as servants) actively by doing, others haue beeene approoved (as soldiers) passiuely by suffering; but *Moses* (being the *man* in our *Text*) is truely interested into either condition, and hath made *double* declaration of his faith, in both kindes of those things that are reported of him, for wee finde both what he *did*, and what he *endured*, and so much of either, as doth manifest him for one of the rarest mirrours among those many, who are musterred and magnified here, to haue *fought the good fight of faith*; and that, in all those occurrents that came to passe (on his part) either before *Israel* went out of *Egypt*, or after; for within one of these two computations of time, all is comprehended which is recorded of him, and for which he is here applauded by the holy Ghost.

The powerfull worke of faith appearing in him before the *Israelites* departure from vnder *Pharaoh*, had a two-folde operation.

1. While he was yet a *Courtier*, (and great in *Court* too) being for so long time the adopted, and reputed sonne of *Pharaohs* daughter, in which time faith wrought in his heart a *gracious resolution*, to giue over that glorious condition.

2. When he put this resolution into practise, casting off the *Court*, and forsaking *Egypt* for a season, and afterwards returning by warrant from *God*, (and as the *Lords Ambassador*) to worke out the peoples freedome: and these passages are particulated vnto vs, in the 24. 25. 26. and 27. Verses.

The further efficacie wherein his faith shined, after he had left *Egypt* altogether, and was gone thence with

The Saints Advantage,

with Gods people, is evident in such relation as is made thereof, ver. 28. 29.

Our Text is a part of the former power of his faith, while he was yet in *Egypt*, wherein, (& that while he was yet a great *Peere*, among these *Pagans*), the Lord mightily, and extraordinarily, wrought in him immediately by himselfe, without all ordinary meanes (that man can imagine) this great grace of *Faith*, which by a holy kinde of heavenly and divine *violence*, enforced him to these

3. Things which lye in these 3. Verses.

1. To relinquish and renounce his whole estate, with all the honours, and advantages annexed therunto, all which, although he had long enjoyed them, and they were many and great, at present, and might (possibly) haue beeene much greater afterward, through the hope of his further rising by meanes of the favour of *Pharaohs daughter*, yet faith makes nothing of these mightie things, but he freely forsaketh all, and willingly refuseth to be called or accounted *her Sonne*, vers. 24.

2. To chuse (in stead of this reiecte honour & roialtie) the miserable and most afflicted state of the people of God, who were in the greatest slavery, and vnder the most grievous tyranny that could be, vers. 25.

3. To judge and censure (and that with a righteous judgement) both his former practises of refusing and chusing, to be lawfull, and good, & well pleasing to the Lord, vers. 26.

And this *third* is the onely thing, where-with we haue to doe, yet before we enter vpon it in particular, we haue one observable thing to note in the generall, to wit, That those graces which are immediately, and extraordinarily wrought in man by the Lord, doe carry mans heart extraordinarily towards the Lord. If God worke faith extraordinarily in *Abraham*, he will leaue his Countrey; he will

Faith
wrought
extraordi-
narily.

or, The faithfulls Well-fare.

will sacrifice his son, doe any thing, deny nothing, at Gods command. If in *Moses* he will leaue all the honour, & riches, and happines in the world, and expose himselfe to any misery, danger, and infamy for the honour of God. The same might be sayd of *Joseph*, of *Ester*, and many other, whose graces haue yeelded rare and wonderfull fruit, because they sprung from more then an ordinary roote. The more immediate any mans graces are from God, the more admirable are the manifestatiōs of those graces before God.

But we intend not to stay here: let vs therefore set forward to this *third effect* of *Moses* faith in the wordes of the 26. verse (contayning the estimation of his sayd acts) and in them, we haue to consider 3. things.

The parts
of the textes

1. The guide and ground of this his estimation, to wit, *Faith*, not common sence, nor carnall reason, for neither of these would haue endurēd any such proceedings.

2. The things esteemed, to wit, the *reproach of Christ*, and the *riches of Egypt*, and these being ballanced by *faith*, and layd one, against the other, the former is found to be much better, and farre beyond the latter.

3. The reason of this his opinion, which ariseth not from any respect of things *present* and *sensible*, but onely and wholly from the happy apprehension, and assurance, that he had of that *invisible*, and *infinite* recompenſe of rewarde layd vp for those who can forgoe all things for Gods glory.

And these are the parts of this verse; touching which, we shall not neede to make any stay vpon the interpretation of any of them, there being no obscuritie, or ambiguity, but all being easie and open to the meanest capacity: we will therefore hasten to the matter of instruction which they doe administer vnto vs.

The Saints Advantage;

And heere, in the very first word [*Esteeming*] (in as-
much as his faith made him thus to *esteeme*) wee might
note vnto you, one excellent propertie, and power of
true faith, which is, to alter the mind, opinion, and
judgement of man from that it was, touching the world,
and all things therein; to *esteeme* the best things therein
so base, as to preferre and chuse the basest estate in the
world, before that which in the eye of the world is the
best. Time was, that *Moses* could make vse of, and pos-
esse the honours of *Egypt*, for forty yeares together, but
now (vnto faith) affliction is better then promotion, fla-
vory then honour, he will rather be a captiue with Gods
people, then a gallant *Courtier*, euen the son of a Kings
daughter: he is now otherwise conceited, opiaionated,
and perswaded then before he was; *Faith* hath so altered
the case with him, that he is nothing so minded as he was.

It is no marvell that the holy Ghost opposeth *faith*,
and *sence*, and that the Apostle sayth, [*we walke by faith,*
and not by sight] for they looked not on things that were
seen, but lived by faith, which fed it selfe, and fastened
them, on things not seene, and so they accounted and
iudged all things base and vile, yea *losse* and *dung*, (yea
as most loathsome and execrable excrements, as the
word signifieth:) and could well brooke to haue them-
selves accounted the base offscouring of all things, thon-
row the excellency of faith that was in them.

Let no man vainely boast of this vertue, or imagine he
hath himselfe possesst of this singular grace, to whose
mind, iudgement, and estimation, all things are not so
base and abhominable, that he can (being put to it by
God) most willingly abandon, and abhorre all riches
and glory; and freely take vp all affliction, wretchednes
and misery; yea, and rather (as our *Moses* heere) make
a good choyse of the worke, then make an ill vse of the
best.

or, The faithfulls Well-fare.

best, that the world can afford. True faith (where it is of a noble, heroicall, heavenly, and divine dispositi-
on, and carries the heart of man into high contempt of the things which before he had in highest esteeme, scor-
ning in the least, to stoole to the greatest and most glori-
ous lure, that can be offred of the things that are below,
and doth disdain to looke after those advantages which are most deare vnto others.

But wee must not dwell here neither, neither is it our present purpose to prosecute this point, but to set for-
ward vnto that whereon we intend (by Gods grace) to in-
sist: and that is taken from the second consideration; which is of the things esteemed, and they (being com-
pared one with another) the [reproach of Christ] is found
farre to exceede, and to bee much better, then the trea-
sures in Egypt.] From whence the maine thing which we haue to learne for our instruction is thus much-

That the worst estate of a childe of God, is better, then the best estate of any wicked man. Doctrine

Note it well; wee say and avouch, that the worst estate of Gods childe, is better then the best of a wicked man.

For the better understanding and beleeving of which point, because at first sight, it may seeme a strange Par-
adoxe, and a proposition impossible to be true; it shall be necessary before we come to proue the same, to explaine it before you, and to give all men to understand, what wee meane by the worst estate of Gods childe, and by the best estate of a wicked man.

And (in a word) thus we meane: that, looke what the world (that is, the men of the world) doe esteeme and judge (on the one part) to be the meanest and most mi-
serable state of any good man: and also what they them-
selues doe againe conceiue (on the other part) to bee

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of owne most happy and comfortable condition, that
(on either part) we intend in this our instruction.

Now all men doe know, that the world doth repute
affliction, disgrace, tyranny, persecution, and all kinde
of cruelty, and slavery, to be the vnaggiest case a man
can possibly be in: and on the other side, the honour,
wealth, prosperity and abundance of all things which
the heart of man can wish, when every thing goes with
him as he would haue it, and all things settle vpon him
to his soules content: this is adjudged the happiest state
of him, or them that haue it. And this is that we account
the best of the one; and the worst of the other, even that,
which themselues doe account so, we aske no other in-
terpreters of our meaning, then the men of the earth, in
their ordinarie and vniversall opinion.

And of these estates being thus vnderstood, we are to
prove, and make good, that the former (being the worst)
is better to a childe of God, then the latter (being the best)
can be, to an vngodly man: yea, that the very gall and
worme-wood, and the most bitter & envenomed things
which the world can giue the godly to drinke; are hap-
pier, and more holsome to digest, then the sweetest por-
tion of their cup, who are vngodly, when it is filled vp to
the brym, and running over with all the rarest, and most
pleasant compositions which the world can powre into
it, of all manner of delicacies and delights that are to be
desired, either for pleasure, or for profit, or for honour, or
for ease, or for ought else, which may take vp & bewitch
the mind, of a worldly man. And thus our meaning be-
ing explained, the matter remaineth now to be proved.

The full confirmation whereof, will soone arise out of
the due consideration of our text, and the true contents
of the same, in case we take such true notice of them as
we ought.

or, The faithfulls W-

Were there no other man but *Moses*,
or example to make good the point but *he*,
which he hath here done; he onely were able
the truth we teach against all *gainesayers* whatsoeuer; in-
asmuch as we finde his practice to be of worthy appro-
bation with God, and also worthy to be a most worthy
president vnto vs from God, and that it is recorded, not
onely for *his commendation*, but for *our imitation* alio: in
which act of his, let vs note these particular and singular
passages, which may leade vs the more to beleue the
truth we are to confirme.

First, how he was brought into the favour of *Pharaoh*,
to wit, by a strange & extraordinary providence of God,
disposing his Parēts there to hide him, where the daugh-
ter of *Pharaoh* must discover him, and in disposing her
heart (having found him) to commiserate the miserable
and helpleſs condition of this forlorne and desolate in-
fant, whom his owne father and mother durst not owne,
or acknowledge, but being the *Kings decree* enforced to
cast him out, the Kings daughter is directed by the Lord
to pittie him for the present, and to provide to haue him
nursed and nurtered, as her owne sonne, by adoption, for
time to come.

Secondly, being thus adopted by her, and nursed, (by
his owne mother as the almighty did order and manage
it) she tooke further care and order for his education, so
as he might be made meete for honour and advance-
ment in her fathers house and service; whereas she might
have brought him vp, in ſome base and ſervile manner,
according to the quality of a *Captives childe*, yea, and the
Lord filled him with vnderſtanding and capacitie to be-
come furnished in *all the learning of the Egyptians*.

Thirdly, being thus qualified, he came to eminency and
grew great in Court; *Pharaoh* not refuſing to preferre
him,

1.

2.

3.

Act. 7. 22.

Advantage,

and not but (in all likelihood) know
new childe; and his preferment seemes to
great office of worth, and revenew, and that
gave him in abundance of wealth; why else, are the
treasures of Egypt (on *Moses* part) opposed to the re-
proach of Christ? It may be he was *Lord-Treasurer of E-
gypt*. (Who can tell the contrary?)

4. *Fourthly*, being thus invested into honour, and wealth,
he continued therein for no small time, but full *fortie*
Act.7.48. *yeares*, which length of time did so season him in the
sweetnesse of what he had, as might (in all reason) make
him most loth, and vawilling to leaue the same.

5. *Fiftly*, having thus long enjoyed all this favour, he was
free to holde it still if he would, no man doth basely vna-
dermine him by suborning *Pharaoh* against him, or by
detraction of him to haue beene a base *Ebrew bratt* from
the beginning, and so to enrage the *King* against him for
that he had crept in thus farre, and kept in thus long;
neither is any thing attempted by any man, which might
make *Moses* to be discontent with his present state, and
so resolute in a humor to leaue it, but he might hold what
he had at his pleasure, even for perpetuitie.

6. *Sixtly*, adde to all these, that if he will be going hence,
either *Egypt* will be too hot for him, or if he will tarry
therein, and ioyne himselfe to his owne people, he could
not but see *Pharaohs* tyranny, and their misery much en-
creasing.

*Their burdens heavier,
Their task-masters fiercer.
Their bondage sorer.*

And his owne among them, (if he will needs make
one) to be more extreame and extraordinary than all the
rest, because he left so much honour, and ease, & wealth,
willingly to come to calamitie, *r* were pity (would *Pha-
raoh*

raoh say) but he should haue enough of it, that was so willing to it, and therefore let him (of all men) be most vexed, pursued and oppressed aboue others, who was so wittles that he could not tell, when he was well, and tarry in that happiness which was so graciously and freely conferd vpon him, and wherein he might haue continued (through the Kings kindnesse and grace) the longest day of his life, and would not.

These few (with some others moe, that might be instanced) being layd together on a heape, doe make vp mightie evidence in the eye of carnall reason to condemne *Moses* of manifest folly in forsaking his present state, and following this course wherevnto he betooke himselfe at this time.

But bring them all (and all that can be pleaded to the same purpose) and let *faith* looke vpon them, that which was a *beam* before, is not so much as a *moath* now, nor worthy in any wise to be respected; this one grace melts all these great things into meere *nullities*, and makes nothing of every thing that was before vrged to this end: neither the kindnesse of the *Kings daughter*, nor the favour of the *King her father*, nor all the great things he got by both, nor his long keeping of them, nor his vndoubted danger, and disgrace in leaving them, nor every of these alone, nor all of them together, could do any thing with *Moses*, but he is resolute, (by *faith*) to forgoe the best estate the earth could yeeld him, that he might partake with the worst, and most woefull condition of Gods people, and to shew it, the holy Ghost doth witnes, that he did willingly *chuse* the one, and *refuse* the other, being not forced (by flesh and blood) to either, that so the power of *faith* might fully and freely expresse it selfe in both, against all apprehensions, and obiections of man what soever.

And why shoulde he haue done thus, if he had not knowne our *Doctrine* to be a most vndeniable truth? And how came he to know so much, but by the extraordina-
ry instinct of Gods immediate illumination? Who revealed thus much to him and gaue him both *faith* to beleue it, and *conscience* to doe it accordingly, in spite of what-
soever might be suggested to the contrary. And why should not we fully assent to the truth hereof, seeing *God* hath gone before vs in discovering, and this man of *God* in doing, the same? Especially seeing besides *Moses* practice, *Gods* approbation, doth warrant vs; the *Lord* hath set to his hand (as it were) and confirmed, and com-
mended this act of *Moses* vnto vs, as a fruit of that holinesse and pietie, which was in him, and should be in vs, who are commaunded to follow the faith of such, as (by *God*) are well reported of vnto vs, as this man is, who hath a most savoury name, in the middest of this sacred Catalogue, wherein so many Saints of rare note, are re-
corded vnto vs, and as much (if not more) is spoken of his faith, then of many others, and more of this one fruit of the same, then of all the rest.

So that, that which is here written of this man, doth ratifie the matter we haue in hand; his practise (thus con-
sidered as we haue said) is plenary prooef of our point; it had beene apparent vanitic, and gyddinesse, not any power, or truth of godlinesse in him, if he had not done by *Gods* direction, who by his spirit informed his mind, and conformed his practise, and (by both) confirmed this vndoubtedt truth vnto vs: otherwise, it might haue well beene thought, he was more brayne-sick then obedient, and beene led from this glory, to that misery, by frenzie, rather than by *faith*. But *faith* made glorious things vile, and vile things glorious vnto him, and so he left the better state which was (indeed) the *worse*, and chose

chose the *worse*, which was (indeed) the *better*, that all men might learne to know the lawfulness of his carriage herein, and the conscience of their owne, if in any such like case, God call them vnto the like course.

Now if besides this of *Moses*, we should muster vp more examples to this end, it were most easie, (but not very necessary) so to doe: this Chapter would furnish vs with a multitude of those that haue (in like manner) done worthily, and beene famous, for this very thing.

What thinke you of *Abraham*, how were his thoughts, how stood his heart this way? Was he not well in his owne Countrey? Could a man be better, then to dwell in his owne free land, and to haue so great abundance as he had of all good things? Yet he must leaue all this *fee-simple*, and whatsoever he had vpon it, to goe he knowes not whither, onely this he knowes, that whither so ever it is, he hath not a foote of ground, nor any thing at all there, but must come from a rich inheritance, and great estate, where he might commaund; to sojourne and be entertained as a stranger vpon curtesie, where he could get foode and lodging for his money. And this he did at Gods command, of his owne accord and unconstrained, as soone as he heard he did obey, which he had no reason at all to haue done, if faith had not furnished him with this perswasion, and furthered him to this practice: had he not knowne the *worst* place and state God called him *vnto*, to haue beene incomparably better then the *best* God called him *from*; he had never stirred his foote; but being convinced of this truth, and mooved of God, he went willingly out, as one that knew well, the *worst* that he could goe *vnto* to witnesse his obedience as a childe of God, would proue more happy to him, then all he could enjoy and possesse vpon other termes.

It were but a fruitlesse filling vp of time, to adde more examples to a thing so evident, and vndeniable as this truth is, we will therefore passe from these, to the *reasons* of the Doctrine, to vnderstand why these things are so, and how they come to passe ; and herevnto we haue the more *reason*, because this that we teach, seemeth to be against all *reason*, and sence, that man can commonly conceiue.

I doe freely professe when *first* I apprehended it in my heart, it appeared like a strange *Paradoxe* to my selfe, a point, incapable of truth, impossible to be beleaved ; and therefore I doe not wonder that it shoulde be so hard of digestion to corrupt nature, and carnall reason, and that it will not downe with so many : *Nature* cannot entertaine it, it is *grace* that must first rectifie nature, and then certifie it hereof. The Lord never put this opinion into any mans heart, nor vrged the practice of it at his hand, before he had refined his vnderstanding from the drosse and dotage, ignorance, and error, wherewith it stands defiled by *corrupt* nature : let vs then stope the *mouth*, yea, the *breath*, of flesh and bloud, and open the passages of the spirit of God, & giue free vent vnto them, and they will soone shew vs the way (and that by good *reason* too) to be throughly possessed of this point of truth, and that it is most worthy to be credited of vs, and embraced by vs.

And the reasons inducing vs herevnto, doe arise out of the due consideration, of a *double conclusion*, which we will propound and prove vnto you, that you may carry them in minde evermore, as *golden* and most precious remembrances, worthy to be engraven deeply and perpetually, in our hearts, that neither *Satan*, nor the world, might ever raze them out, but that they might remayne with vs all our dayes, even till death. And the *conclusions* are these two.

1. No estate can be *evill* to a childe of God, but even his *worst*, is *good* for him, yea *best* vnto him.

2. No estate can be *good* to a wicked man, but even his *best* is *evill* to him, yea *worst* for him.

The very *worst* prooues well to a godly man, and *bad* is the *best*, to the vngodly. And in the cleare confirmation of these two *Conclusions*, the reasons of our Doctrine will most evidently arise vnto vs, for it cannot but follow, yea flow most naturally in the course of all sound argumentation, that, if the ones *evill* be *good* to him, and the others *good* become *evill* to him, then must the meanest estate of the former, be much more excellent, than the greatest happines of the latter.

Now either of these *Conclusions* releth vpon vndeniable proofe and demonstration.

For the *first* thus: That estate which commeth vnto a childe of God, accompanied with the infinite loue, wisdome, goodnes, and power of God, must needes be *best* vnto him: But his *worst* estate commeth thus vpon him: Therefore it must needes be *best* to him. Nothing here is so much as questionable; for sence sayes the *first* Proposition is true, that what comes so, comes well. And the *Word of God* in the evidence thereof, and the *Worke of God* in the experience thereof, vpon all his afflicted ones, sayth the *second* is as true; the *third* then (must issue vndoubtedly out of them both.

Againe, that estate which worketh towardes the furtherance of our *best good of all*, must needes be *best* for vs; But the *worst*, the most woefull, and distressed state of every childe of God doth worke for the *best*: therefore it is *best* for him. In this argument all is sound, for no man can doubt of the *first* Proposition, and the Apostle puts the *second* out of doubt, where he sayth [*All things*, (and there he comprehends the worst things the world can

1. Conclusion prooved.

Rom. 8. 22. yeld) worke together for the best :] the Conclusion then comes in of it selfe. And so the first ground is cleare.

2. Conclusion prooved. For the second thus. That estate which doth so harden mans heart, that he becommeth thereby least capable of mercie, and most lyable to iustice, (and so furthereth his vtmost confusion, and eternall over-throw) must of necessarie be the worst for a man that may be : But a wicked mans best estate doth thus : Therefore even his best estate is miserable to him. No man can with any colour question the first Proposition ; and God giues vs sound

*Prov. 1. 32. confirmation of the second, where he sayth (easie slayeth the foolish, and the prosperitie of fooles destroyeth them :) here, by the (foole) we must vnderstand the vngodly man, and by (prosperitie) all that which he iudgeth most happie to himselfe in this life. Now if nothing bring a wicked man sooner to destruction than that which he most affec-
teth, and desireth, surely, the same is worst of all for him.)*

Againe, that must needs be a mans worst estate, which is most accursed of God to a man : But a wicked mans best estate is most accursed of God vnto him : Therefore his best estate cannot be but worst vnto him. The first Proposition is easie, and evident (of it selfe) to be beleived : The second is avouched by Moses, where he curseth in the name of the Lord [all the encrease, and store, and fruit of a wicked man, whether of his body, or beast, or ground.]

*Deut. 28.
37. 18.*

Now if his encrease be accursed, then the more he hath, the more accursed he is, and as either hirselfe, or any thing he hath aboundeth, so doth the curse of God abound with it ; if he grow from hundredths to thousands, so also doe his curses multiply from the Lord, who hath cursed the blessings of every vngodly person. And it is to be marked, (as a most remarkable curse) that he is noe cursed in the want of fruit, or barrennesse of his bodie, beasts,

Mal. 2. 2.

Note.

beasts, or ground, for that would every common man account a curse indeede, but, he is accursed in the possession, and prosperitic, and growth of these things; and this is a more *wofull*, by how much it is a more *wonderfull* curse, that a man should haue so much, and be so much the more *vnhappie* by having it. So then, if thus it be, then is a wicked mans *best estate worst* for him, because it is most accursed to him.

And thus these *two Conclusions* stand vpon cleare and *vnquestionable* grounds, and are impregnable truthes, and being so, our mayne *Doctrine* must needes issue from them both, as naturally as water from a fountaine; and that thus.

If no estate can be evill vnto a *good man* but even his *worst* is good vnto him; and (on the contrary) if no estate can be good to a *wicked man*, but even his *best* is evill to him; why then, it must needes come to passe, that the *worst* estate of Gods childe is *better* then the *best* of any wicked man: But both these have beene abundantly prooved and therefore the truth we teach, is fully confirmed; for can any man so much as once doubt at all, whether the meanest *good* estate be to be preferred to the greatest that is *evil*? or durnurre whether he should chuse of the *two*, (if he were put to it) *a poore* and perplexed condition, which may helpe him to heaven, or a prosperous and *opulent* estate, which would hasten him to hell? Certainly this question would soone be assoyled, if it were put to any man (had he but common sence) to be determined, for even naturall reason would giue quicke resolution, that the *worst* of that whereby a man might be happy, were to be chosen and preferred, before the *best* of that which will procure a mans misery.

Why then, the *worst* of the one being *so good*, and the *best* of the other *so bad*, we cannot but yeeld to our *Doc-*

trine, being overcome by vndeniable evidence, both of example, in him that hath tryed both estates by his owne experience; and of reason, approoving that which he (vpon tryall) had practised, in refusing the *best* of the one, to choose the *worst* of the other. So that if we will beleue either *Moses* (who is the man that hath done it) to evidence the truth of his faith, or *God*, who hath magnified *Moses* in that which he hath done, to be truely faithfull, our mindes must be throughly settled in the assured perswasion of what we haue so plainlye propouned, and prooved so plentifullly, and hold it fast vnto our owne hearts, as our dutie to doe the like, if the Lord shail cast any the like occasion vpon vs, and call vs forth, to try, and declare our faith, by being put to the practise of this truth, to see whether we will so esteeme the reproach of *Christ*, and the persecution of the Saints, that we will giue over and abandon, the riches of the earth, and *the pleasures of sinne*, to embrace the bitternessse of those that are beloved of *God*, before the sweetest delicates of those who are abhorred of him. A time may come, when it may be our turne either to avouch this Doctrine by our conformitie therewith, or deny the Lord who hath avouched it to be his truth. (And cursed are they who stand convinced in *Conscience*, of any truth of God, wherunto they refuse to yeeld *obedience*.)

We should doe all well then to doe (as the Wise-man Pro. 10.14. sayth all wise men doe) to wit, [*lay vp knowledge*] even the knowledge of this particular, to bring it into practise, that our good workes suitable to it, may make good this word of God which hath shewed it to vs, and that therein, every man may become a *Moses*, to be thus faithfull before the Lord, as he was, in this thing.

And that we may be the better brought vnto it, and haue our naughtie hearts the more happily provoked to the

the holy purpose of this heavenly practise ; let vs now proceede from the apparant proofe of the point, to the powerfull application of the same, vnto all such, vnto whom it doth, or may any way appertaine : that is, all sorts of men, both *good* and *bad*, *Saints* and *sinners*; something it hath to say vnto either of them severally, asunder, and something to them both, *ioyntly* together. There is very little truth (if any at all) that *God* reveleth, but it lookest every way, and is of some important consequence to all persons whatsoever, if the sappe and iuyce of it be pressed and wrung out, as it ought to be.

Let vs then in the *first* place consider of what vse it is Vse 1. to Gods owne people, and what fruit of comfort his blessed and beloved ones, doe receiue from the sacred truth which we haue sowne, for nothing but heavenly ioy, and sweete consolation, can be reaped and carryed in, to them from any thing which the Lord hath revealed from heaven ; for it is written, [*Light is sowne for the Psal.97.11. righteous, and ioy for the upright in heart.*]

And (to speake as the truth is) what childe of G O D can speake of this truth, or heare of it being spoken, without solace to his very soule, if he haue faith to beleue the same ? Certainly, if we be not comforted by it, it is onely because we are not confirmed in it; were wee well resolved of it, we could not but reioyce in the assurance thereof.

For why ? What is it that troubles and perplexes a childe of God, but his present estate of misery and distresse ; and the worse a mans misery is, the more woefull is our distraction through the same, and when it comes to the *worst*, many times we grow from distraction to desperation, and beginne to throw our selues into forlorne and hopeles and infernall conceits touching our present condition, and to give over both our selues, and all ex-
pecta-

Comfort
to Gods
children.

pection of ever being any more happie ; the present cloud of our calamitie, is so thicke and darke, that wee can see no sun-shine through it, nor dreame of any more good dayes during our liues, but make account to be perpetually miserable and vnhappy, and to be in so bad case, as none can be in worse, nor *many*, nay, scarce *any*, (as we thinke) in the like.

Now in this case, what can be more truely sayd to the
 Mat. 22.29. Saints, then that of Christ to the Sadduces, [*Yee erre not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God :*] it is onely your ignorance that makes you ill conceited of the state you are in, and to mistake both it and your selues so much as you doe ; did you vnderstand the Scriptures, and the power of this truth of God, as wee haue made it plaine, it would soone be seene, how wyde you were from the truth of your estate ; for, whereas you thinke (now you are at worst) its scarce possible that any bodie should be so bad, this truth will tell you, and teach you to know, both that you are now no worse then any child of God may be ; as also that no wicked man is, or can be so well at his best, as you are and shall ever be at your worst.

And indecde so much the more sweete and heavenly is the benefit of this doctrine, by how much it expels the deadly venime and poyson, of one of the most heavie and hellish temptations that doth vsually sursprise the soule of them that are afflicted and humbled of God. And that is, the ayme and estimation, they haue taken of themselues and their estate, (not considered in it selfe, but) compared with others, who are wholly free, and feele no such sorrow or extremitie as they doe : And com-
 monly the Devill carries the eye, and settles the obserua-
 tion of Gods children, onely vpon such impious, and
 prophane persons, as escape the misery whereinto they
 are

Note.

are fallen; and having fastned them vpon such an object, he then turmoyles the minde, and tyrannizeth ouer the thoughts, and doubles, yea multiplyes the vexations of their soules, not so much that they are *in distresse*, but, most of all, that others are *out*, who are notoriously vngodly; and hereupon, their thoughts doe offer to fly in Gods face, as if he were nothing so gracious, or righteous, as he is magnified to be, seeing hee lets his *owne children* fare so ill, and suffers his enemies, who are *rebels* against him, and no better then *dogs* or *swine*, (in his account) to be as well as heart can wish: and it is *kindnes*, or *iusitice*, in any earthly father to vse his children worse then his cattell? and if not, how much *lesse loue* and *more wrong*, must it be in him that is heavenly, who makes himselfe the mirroure of all mercy, and favour: and then as *God* is thus censured, so are wicked men applauded, and the generation of the iust condemned.

Satan hath not set vpon a few with this suggestion, and there are not many who haue beeene assaulted, but they haue beeene foyled. The stoutest of Gods army haue shrunke shrewdly, and well neere fainted through frailty, a man would wonder to see such mighty champions so miserably dishartened, and discontented, when they haue taken notice how themselues haue beeene afflicted, and other (most vngodly persons) exempted from the evils wherewith they haue beeene heavily laden so long.

David was so deeply discomfited hereat, that he began to conceit well of wicked mens estate, and to question (yea, and condemne) his owne, and all the people of *God*, concerning this thing, when he saw the prosperetie of sinners, and the misery of himselfe. Let himselfe give vs evidence how he was gastard, and like to haue gone quite beside himself, yea to haue fallen right down,

the divell had so mislead him, and tript vp his heeles, that he was even gone and ready to give over all: wee haue the particulars related by himselfe at large in the Psal. 73. 1. 73. Psalme; where he tels vs, how this very thing had like to haue cost him an irrecoverable fall, & had wounded him almost incurably; and how much a-doe he had to bring his heart to the due consideration of this matter, and to temper his mind which was so mightily *distempered*, with *doating* on his owne distresses, and *dreaming* of their happiness; and when he compared these together, (to wit, their welfare, and his owne affliction) he was in a heavy taking, and growing toward a hydeous resolution; even (as it were) *to hang his religien on the hedge*, and to ioyne himselfe to such as were hellishly irreligious, because at the present they were in better case then he.) Neither was this temptation for a *little* time, nor did it, (during the time it held him) trouble him a *little*, but it stucke long by him, and bit the bone; insomuch that he could not either easily, or quickly, come to settle himselfe into better, or sounder thoughts, that he might stay himselfe vpon the truth. And why, (I pray you) did his owne *bad*, and their *good* estate, trouble and puzzle him so much? was it not because he was not either at all informed, or not well advised of this truth we teach from God, who hath avouched vnto vs) as wee haue heard) that the *worst* estate of his owne people, is incomparably beyond the *best* prosperity of wicked persons? Had *David* learned this lesson well, all this labour, and danger, had beene spared, and he had beene well able, to haue waded happily through the deepest temporary vnhappines, the world could haue brought vpon him.

Nor was *David* the onely man in this conflict, but good *Jeremiah* (a man of no meane piety, or ordinary parts)

parts) he was also very sorely put too it in this particular, and never so neere a conquest in any *combate*, as in this: his owne mouth shall say how he was amazed, and put to a pittifull *non-plus*, when he considered, the course of Gods dispensation of these outward favours. That God Iere. 12. 1. was righteous he durst not deny, he knew it right well; 2. 3. but a reason why wicked men should be in rest & peace, and himselfe so wretched, hee could not any way comprehend: this he saw, that they were had in honour and *admiration*, he was in contempt and derision; hereat, he was at his wits end with wondring, and though he confess he durst not enter into disputation with God, yet hee is bold to aske him the question, and entreat him to tell him, how, and why, *they are in peace, and are planted, & doe prosper, that transgresse rebelliously?* whereas with him (and other of Gods holy ones) it was nothing so, but contrariwise all misery and calamity that could be, came vpon them; how this should be, he could not tell, he desires to talke with God about it, not being sufficient to answere and satisfie himselfe in this thing. And how came it to passe that a *Prophet* of God, of surpassing sanctity and holinesse, of extraordinary vnderstanding and knowledge, a man mighty in grace, of an impregnable spirit, was thus battered and beated downe with this weapon? why surely, for ought we can see, the one-ly reason was because he had not yet girt on the powerfull sheld of this precious truth, to saue him harmeles of the dreadfull dynt of that poysoned sword wherewith he hath hurt so many holy saints of the living God; had he beene armed with the evidence of this doctrine, and able to haue sayd, [*thus*] why? the very *worst* of a child of God is beyond the *best* of an vngodly man, this point had never made any scruple, nor beene occasion of any

doubt, or demurre in his mind, himselfe had beene soone satisfied, *Satan* had beeene soone confuted, all, on all sides had beeene so well resolved, that either there would haue beeene a quicke end, or no beginning of this businesse.

Unto these two, it were too easie to instance many more (in Gods booke) as great, and as good as they, who haue beeene surprized in the same kinde, but it is needless to multiply more that haue beeene so assaulted, for we want not, (if wee looke well about vs) those that at this day, are in like manner tempted, the temptor having tryed this bayte and found it to ensnare so many, makes vse of it still, and ever will, because of the prevailing experience of the same. Doth hee not come vpon Gods people now, and (in like manner) vprebrayd God to them, and them to themselues, hoping to make them wary of the way of God, and to encline to his course? what (saith he to a persecuted and afflicted Christian) is this the God you thus magnifie, for infinite wisedome, power, providence, kindnes, loue, mercy and faveur, that in all these he is admirable, yea incomprehensible? and are you those redeemed, and beloved ones, for whom all this (and I know not what more) is reserved? are you his sons, daughters, his deare spouse, yea neere as his owne members? is't possible, he should be thus good, and you in so ill case, and others whom he makes you beleue he abhors, and neglects, to enjoy the common mercies which you want? How can this stand either with his mercy, or your piecy? with his good promises or your godly practises? it cannot be but either he must not be the God you make account off; or you nor the men you imagine your selues to be; certaintly either his goodnes, or yours must faile, seeing so it is, that you are in worse case then they that are starke naught; were he such a God, or you such men, as is supposed, it would be otherwise then it

is, both with you and with these wicked ones, they should haue lesse prosperitie, & you more happines, you should be in better condition, and they in worse.

And if once he haue but brought vs to make question either of Gods goodnesse, or our owne, he hath enough, to make vs *wholly* miserable, in suspecting both the goodnesse of Gods nature, and of our owne grace, because he well knowes the Lord cannot endure, but doth abhorre, both his owne, and his childrens state to be mistrusted, in as much, as (besides, the detestable dishonour offred to his owne most glorious Maiestie, to be brought vnder the *distrust* and icalousie of his creature, as if he were not that he seemed to be) the Devill is herein gratifyed, and his lyymmes are applauded, and the gracious Saints, and sonnes of the most high condemned, as if those who by the Word of God seeme to be his *best* beloved, (in regard of the many glorious things that are spoken of them) should (by his worke) appeare to be most neglected, (in regard of the many grievous things that lye vpon them) and on the other side, such as are laden with many terrible threatnings in the Scriptures, should confute all that is therein denounced against them, by the perpetuall experience of a prosperous condition for the greatest part of their dayes.

And this was the thing about which *Jobs* friends lay at him so hard from day to day, and would haue had him given vp all, and granted himselfe an hypocrite, being perswaded themselues, and doing their best to perswade him, that it was an absolute impossibilitie, and a thing simply incompatible

Both with Gods iustice and mercy,

And with Iobs religion, and piety.

That he who was (by Gods owne mouth once and *Iob. 1. 2.*

Iob. 2. 3. againe) commended to be the best, (one of them) in the world for goodnes, should become the woefull spectacle of the whole world for extraordinary evill of affliction and distresse. But Job himselfe was wonderfull happy in this passage, and knew well how it was with him before the Lord, and all that they could vrge, did not make him start *a hayre* from his integritie ; hence he cals them miserable Comforters, and *Physitians* of no value ; and comforts himselfe with that assurance which his soule did finde in the vndoubted evidence of his eternall happiness, which the eye of his faith could clearly, and comfortably discerne, through the thickest of his present calamitie and tribulation.

He well knew (which we must all learne, and labour to know) that our present estate in this world is no good glasse, or spectacle to looke through, and to represent a childe of God so to vs, as the Lord lookes vpon him, and as before the Lord we must esteeme him; no, nothing is more deceivable, and lesse to be trusted, then the *visible* condition of any man, in respect of his *Temporalities*, which may flow, yea *overflow*, to the most prophane, and fall, and *ebbe*, even *a dry*, to the last *drop*, from the heires of heaven, as most vsually they doe ; and though they doe, yet are they much more happy when they are wholly *emptie*, then the other can be in their most abundant fulnes ; and better in the *depth* of their misery, then the men of the world in their *highest strayne*, and greatest *streame* of prosperitie. And were our vnderstandings so enlightened herein, that we could be stedfastly settled in the infallible perswasion hereof ; this prevayling plea of the *Temptor*, would proue a meere nullite, a very vanity ; and we should be able, not onely to endure, or holde out, in such a hard time, as we cannot shun (as divers of Gods deare

deare children haue done) but with *Moses*, rather make choyce of such a meane state, and forlase a better, to approue our *obedience*, then to dwell in the *Tents*, and enjoy the delights of the vngodly, vpon such *tearmes*, as ordinarily their *tenure* is taken, and holden, (betweene the *divell* and them) here in this world.

Let no mans *temporall condition* then, be the least occasion to call his *spirituall*, or *eternall state* into question, be it farre from every *faithfull man* to iudge according to such outward and *uncertaine appearance*, *God* never built his *goodnesse* to vs, nor our *happines* before him, vpon such *sand*, which will *swell*, and *sincke*, vpon the *shift* of every *wind*, and *surges* of every *tyde*, the *foundatiion* of his *loue* is more *firme* and *vnmooueable*. And know, there is no *happines* in the *whole earth*, good enough to be the *least token* of his *true loue*, nor any *earthly evill* vnder *heaven*, bad enough (even at the *worst*) to *distemper* the *hearts* of his *elect*, in the *least*, yea though all the *poysone* and *malignitie* thereof, were possible to be *emptied* vpon one man. He that hath assured vs that our *worst*, doth exceed the *best* of other men, would haue vs *hearten* our *selues*, and *solace* our *soules* herein, knowing that the *true weight* of this *most worthy truth*, will *overpoyze* and *beare downe* all *temporary affliction* that *hangeth on*, or *presseth downe* in this *present evill world*.

Be it graunted, (for it cannot be denied) that the *worst* end of the *staffe* is in the *hand* of *Gods people*, and that it is *ill* with them, when *worse men* fare *well*, let the *devill* haue thus much *yeelded*, if he will dispute the *case*; (*truth* is *able* to *giue error* *some advantage*, and yet *conquer too*) well, what will he herevpon *interre*? what shall be his *forced* and *infernall Conclusion* of this our *free*

Note.

concession? Why this, that Gods people are in *worse* case then wicked men; well, be it so, and what of that? Say, they are, will any thing follow to *their* true discomfort, whose soules the Lord would not haue made sad? if any thing more then this, let the devill say his *worst*, and produce, and presse it, to the *utmost*, but if this be *all*, all is *nothing*: Satan is confounded, we are confirmed, wicked men are befool'd, in all this; for why? though (in some earthly, and temporary fence) we may say, our case may be *worse* then theirs, and theirs *better* then ours, yet God hath given vs to know, that in spirituall and heavenly consideration, our *worst* is better then their *best*, and this Proposition we doe, and dare avouch, in the face of our fiercest adversary the devill, or the most furious of those tyrants which he provoketh against vs; who thought to inferre some hydeous and hopeles consequence out of these poore premisses, whereas nothing can issue from our perplexitie, and their peace, by any sound evidence, but that which will be.

Glorious to the Lord,
 joyful to his people,
Grieuous to the vngodly, and
Mischieuous to the devill himselfe.

Who observing vs thus *completely* armed, against his mightiest engine, must now, either with *shame* give over his old trade of tempting, or with *sorrow* give over his idle hope of prevayling, and begin to thinke himselfe lesse able to conquer vs, and every childe of God (who hath this hope) to be *more then a Conquerour* through Christ, who hath loved them, and in his loue made thus much knowne vnto them, to make them *heartie*, in their *hardest estate.*

Rom.8.37.

And

And now (Beloved) is the accuser of our bretheren (and Rev. 12.10. of our selues) cast out, and overcome; we haue moone, he is downe, for at the lowest, he sees that we know our selues to be farre aboue all his lymmes, even all the highest, and happiest, they can be in: and seeing he perceiues that we now vnderstand this truth, what hope hath he to make vs by any meanes miserable, seeing we can beleue that we are more happy then any of his can be, in our greatest misery.

And that we may be the better enabled in our selues to overbear him, let vs descend from the generall notice hereof, vnto those particular instances of all kindes of e-
vill wherenvnto we are incident, and wee shall finde true cause triumphantly to out-face him in every of them, from one to another, as we may haue occasio to enquire into them in order.

Put the case where you please, nay let *Satan* haue leaue (if you will) to particulate where he will, in those miseries, which he imagines may be most for his advantage, and our damage: whether *povertie*, or *captivitie*, or *infamy*, or *tyranny*, or *death* it selfe; we shall sufficiently solace our selues, and silence him, in each of these.

Let vs looke a little into them severally: Is not the *Po- Poverty*, *vertie* of a child of *God* better then the *wealth* of the wicked? Let *Lazarus* and *Dives* be the men that shall decide the matter; I dare say you haue read, and heard of them both, in *Gods Booke*; the one is described by his penury and want, the other by his superfluitie and abundance: the one fared deliciously every day, and was sumptuously arayed in purple and fine linnen; the other had but rags (and scarce them) to cover him, and desired but the offall or reliques of the rich mans table to refresh his hungry body, and to fill his empie belly. Now, (I pray you) F which

which of these two, was in the better case, and which of their two conditions would you chuse, all things considered? I suppose no man that hath heard all the truth that is tolde of them both, but he had much rather be in Lazarus poore state, then haue the riches of the other, and so the poverty of Gods childe, is happier then the vngodly mans abundance; and that which was here but Parabolically propounded, vnder these two persons, will be found really true betweene any two in the world, in
 Psal. 37. 16. their condition. [Better is a little (sayth David, first, and
 Pro 15. 16. Cap. 16. 8. Salomon once and againe) that the righteous hath, then the
 plentie and store of a wicked man, nay, of many wicked men.] Our least doth much exceede their most, in every respect, whether of money, meate, apparell, or whatsoever.]

Imprison-
ment.

Act. 12.

Againe, is not our restraint and imprisonment, better then their libertie and freedome? Let Gods childe be the prisoner, and the impious person be free at pleasure; a prison will be found happier to him, then a pallace to the other. It may soone be tryed betweene Peter, and Herod, the one was in hard restraint, even in chaynes, the other might goe where he would; yet (I warrant you) he that reades the story of these two, and counts the middle and both ends, would rather be Peter in the loathsome dungeon, then Herod in the highest admiration. Base vermine devoure Herod in all his pompe, magnificence, and roylarie: the Angell of God guards Peter in restraint, and brings him out miraculously, and ioysfully; and this is left recorded of God to comfort vs (inasmuch as nothing is more against nature, then to be caged vp, and kept in) that we might know, that our God can make that restraint more happy to his, then another mans enlargement can be to him. The Bird that is kept in a cage is safe, and well provided for, of all things meete to make him sing, but the

the *Vulture*, and *Kyte*, often prey vpon those that fly in the open firmament of heaven.

Nay, say it come to *captivitie*, (which is a strayne of extraordinary restraint) put case *Gods childe* be taken captive, and kept in slavery, and that *Gods enemy* be the party in authoritie to detayne him there, and to tyrannize over him in a strange Land: I make no question but the *captivitie* of *Gods people*, shall be found to be a condition more truely comfortable, then another mans *eminency*, yea *soveraignity*, though he were the King of that Countrey wherein they are kept in bondage. *Daniell* and *Nebuchadnezzar* shall decide it, the one (viz: *Daniell*) was the *captive*, the other was the *King*, let any man say (who hath considered what is sayd of them both) which of the two he would chuse to be. Surely, if the oddes had not bin extraordinary, in the comparison, and proportion of these estates, *Moses* had made no good match, in leaving to be a *Courtier* to become a *captive*; but he well knew that the meanest and most oppressed *Israelite* in *Egypt*, was more happie then that mighty *Monarch*, that kept them vnder. *Soveraignity* in a *Pagan*, is not cōparable to *slavery* in a *Christian*. Let *God* give sentence by his revealed word, & it will be apparant to be a truth vndeniable and vndoubted. A *throne*, & a *crowne* cannot be so good to another, as a *cottage*, yea, a *dunghill* to those that are the *Lords*.

Againe, is not our *persecution* better then their *pleasure*? *Persecuti-* and are not our very *distresses*, beyond their *delights*? I ^{on.} think the *three children* in the *fiery fornace*, will soone *Dan. 3:* satisfie vs for that, for they were in more comfortable *plight* in the *midst* of these *fiercest flames*, then he was who cast them in; and that the *tyrant* himselfe is forced to *confesse*, & also maketh *decrees* to *confirme* the same

vnto others, that out of his mouth, all men may know the power and favour of the Lord to his owne, in sweetening their extreamest bitternes; and his wrath and vengeance against all vngodly ones, in envenoming and poysoning their greatest sweetnes. God hath many precious comforts for the persecuted, but nothing but curses and plagues for persecutors. The very infamy and reproach, of such as suffer for the truth, doth surpassee the honour and reputation of those that cast contempt vpon them; for the Lord doth renowne the one, & renounce the other: Men fawne vpon mightie tyrants with glorious titles, but God doth frowne vpon them as base and ignominious persons. How many pages of his sacred booke are perfumed, with the odour of their sweete names, who haue beene disgraced for God? and how many stories doe record the rotten, & stincking memory of their oppressors? the one goe for glorious martyrs, the other for egregious and defamed malefactors. And this made some who mockt the Apostles at the first, when they had afterward better bethought themselues, they left mocking, and became Disciples; they gave over reproaching, and fell to professing the Gospel; and they had no reason thus to doe, had they not knowne that it had bin more excellent to haue bin an infamous Christian, then an honourable infidell.

Act. 2.

But passing over all these, and supposing the worst that can come, (if the worst doe come to the worst) if men must resist to bloud, and that Death must end all the foresaid afflictions, of povertie, imprisonment, captivitie, persecution, infamy, and whatsoever can be endured in this life. Is not our Death better then their life? yea, God hath said it, as it may appeare in that which he hath enforced from the mouth of a most wicked man to witnes it. What say you to Balaams wish, (and that vpon his best thoughts),

Heb. 12. 4.

thoughts) when he had but the taste, and seene (as yet) but the glympse of the happines, and glory of Gods people? even *Balaam* who came of purpose to curse and maligne them, and therefore, (vnto him) it may well be thought, the life of Gods people was as bad, as a death, & worthy of his vtmost execration; yet no sooner had *God* shined a little vpon him, onely with some little *light*, (without al *life*) of this truth; but the man is more in loue with the *death* of the righteous, then with his owne *life*, & would gladly cease to *live* as he did, to *dye* as they doe; his wish shewes enough to make this good with advantage, how earnestly doth he vtter it? [*Let my soule dye the death of the Righteous, let my last end be like unto his*] and no man in cōmon sence can wish any thing but that which either is *indeede*, (or in his apprehension) for his owne well-fare. Moreover, how many singular respects are there wherein, the *death* of Gods childe is to be preferred to the *life* of a wicked man?

Our death is precious;

Psal. 116.

Their death is vile:

15.

Our death desireable;

Psal 15. 4.

Their life abominable.

Phil. 1. 23.

2 Pet. 2. 10.

Thus in the *last enemy* which is *death*, we overgoe the *vngodly*, and are, (or ought to be) so farre from changing *lives* with them, that we will not giue our *death* (which is the *worst* that can befall vs in this world) for *their life*, which is the onely *darling* they desire beyond all other, to enjoy vpon the earth.

And so we haue seene in all these particulars severally, how the oddes is ours in all respects, there's more to be got by our *greatest evills*, then by all their *best good*, instance where you will, its evident, in every thing which can be named, or conceited.

I will now speake but once more ; and that shall be of all, and every of our evils summ'd vp together, and gathered into a *totall*, that as in the *Items* before, so now in them all at once, it may appeare, that the whole masse of our misery, or the greatest measure thereof, that can be powred in, pressed downe, even till it run over vpon vs, is more happy, & much better, then all the good things, that can be cast vpon wicked persons, yea though the whole world should empty all her fulnes, and excellency, to give them the *largest* contentment, that could be wished.

And we will give you sufficient security for the truth hereof, in one that is beyond all exception, to wit, *Iesus Christ*, who was a man of sorrowes, a mirror of miseries, in whom all kinde of calamity did combine, and settled it selfe vpon his sacred person, (considering as he was man) seizing both vpon soule and body at once, & in inexpressible manner vpon both, and either. It would bee too tedious to particulate those severall passions which he felt, neither indeede is it more possible for vs to declare them, then to endure them : How was he handled, and humbled, of *God*, of *men*, of *devills* ?

Of God, in injustice, seeing he suffered in mans stead.

Of men, in malice, being instigated by the divell.

Of the divel, in outrage, being permitted of God to afflict him.

The severity of *Gods* law, the extreamity of mans cruelty, the vtmost of the divels tyranny, was exercised vpon him ; betweene these three he carried (at once) the vengeance of heaven, the malignity of the earth, and the despite of hell, all these envenomed vyalls being full of his fathers feircest wrath, and most dreadfull indignation even to the loathsome lees, and poysinous dregs, were powred

powred vpon his precious soule and body, so that hee
was *all over drentcht* into the most wofull condition
that a creature could be, as carrying the malediction of
the most mighty God, and that whole curse, which was
due, (by *divine law*) to man-kindes corrupt nature in the
elect.

Now take him at the very *worst*, and vtmost of all this
evill, imagine him as betrayed by *Iudas*, apprehended
by the *High Priests* servants, pynned, and arraigned
before *Pilate*, and there reproached, blindsfolded, bu-
feted, and every way most barbarously abused, with
thornes, rods, and whatsoever could be done to his ign-
ominy, and misery, follow him from thence to his
Crosse and thinke what he endured there, in sight of all
men, besides the *unseene sufferings* of his soule, before in
the garden, and now againe, which made him fill the
firmament of heaven with strong, and strange cryes, as
being *simply insufferable* to a meere creature, (without
the vter destruction of the same) vnlesse it had a *Diety*
to support it. And in this basest, bitterest, and most hea-
vie condition, set by him some one among the sons of
the *mighty*, and conceit that *man* in a compleat contrarie-
ty to all this, put vpon him all the pompe, pleasure, prin-
cipality, power, honour, and whatsoever heart would
haue; *aignifie* him with the dominion of the whole
world, and let all the crownes vnder heaven be brought
into one, and set vpon his head, nay, *diefie* him) as *He-
rod* would haue beene) and make him the onely *M-
O-N-A-R-C-H* of *mankinde* and that nothing may be wan-
ting to his absolute welfare in a temporary, and ter-
renall estate, let all *mynes* yeelde him *treasure*, all frutes
giue him *pleasure*; yea thinke him as much more hap-
py aboue all men, as *Christ* was more miserable then a-

ny man. And when these two shall stand together (thus) in thy thoughts, say which of the two thou iudgeſt in better case, and in whetherſt estate thou wouldeſt chuse to stand; either in Chriſt at the worſt, or this man at the beſt. I make no queſtion but every true Christian would quickly determine the case, and make his choyſe, and none but the Atheiſt, or infidell, would take any part with the other. Why then, is it not plaine that the greatest heape of moſt heavy vnhappines, being piled vp together, and throwne vpon the person of a childe of God, is more light, and eaſie to beare, beyond all comparison, then mountaines, or mynes, yea, or whole worlds of wealth, and whatſoever else of the beſt things, that can be either devised, or desired, to fill the ſenſuall heart of ſinful man. These two then, (thus conſidered) doe cleare the case, and make our comfort vnuqueſtioneable, that all our evill exceedeth all their good, and that therefore, though the Lord, doe pleafe to lay his heavy hand vpon his owne, & to let those profane ones goe free, and vntouched, and ſo ſeeme to be in better case then we, yet now wee ſee not onely by prooſe of evidence, but alſo by powerfull expe-rience, that the worſt we haue, is better then the beſt; our miſeries are beyond their mercies, yea, our hell, exceeds their heaven, and ſo they ſillily inſult over vs, but we iuſtly over them; and Satan is but a ſoole to turmoyle vs with these perplexed thoughts, of the wel-being of his vassals, and our ill condition, vnilefſe hee could overturne, and take away the ground of this gloriouſ truth, which overturnes him, and makes vs to glory and triumph in our moſt grievous tribulations, vnder the bleſſed hope of much preſent, and of infinite and everlasting felicity to come to vs, for ever and ever, in due time.

And beloved, vpon these premisses (thus conſidered)

wcc

wee ought to be so farre from wondering at our miseries, that we should rather turne all our admiration vpon our selues, and begin to wonder at our owne weakenes, ignorance, and infidelity, and to bewayle our wonderfull want of faith in this heavenly truth ; which if it were well beleaved, and applied of vs, might and would, be so farre from encreasing our cares, that it would rather cause vs to [account it exceeding ioy when we fall into many tribulations] and in stead of blessing vngodly men in our thoughts, at their best, wee would blesse God for the basest, and most dejected state whereinto it should please him to suffer them to cast vs : did we know all, we would soone be weary of their welfare, and most willing to vndergoe that condition which is reputed most wretched and wofull.

Shall we lanch a little further into the deepe, and discover the rich, rare, and hidden treasures of this heavenly truth ? that by our knowledge of them, we may truely finde, that [as our afflictions doe abound for Christ, our consolations should abound, (yea superabound) much more, by Christ,] and also, that the further we wade in the particulars of our woe, we shall still descry more abundance of blessed ioy, and therein wee may swime and bath our selues, in our greatest bitterness, and by it, be sweetely saved from sinking in that sea of sorrow & distresse, wherein so many doe most miserably (as in a bottomlesse gulfe) drowne and overwhelme themselues irrecoverably. Assuredly if we come to survey the happy, and worthy, differences of our worst estate, and their best, and what singular & surpassing advantages we haue of them every way ; wee should (at once) gather both much abundant assurance of this truth, and also evidence of incomparable comfort from the same : inasmuch as it will vndeniably

James 1. 2

2 Cor. 1. 5.

ly appeare, that in our *heaviest* estate, our state is so *heavenly*, as may, and will, (being rightly ballanced) who-
ly over-beare all discomforts that can come vpon vs; &
teach vs to *trample* tribulation vnder our feete, as a thing
more fit for our holy contempt and scorne; then for our
carnall care or feare.

Let vs then make our approach, and drawe neere to
some few, of those *innumerable* particulars, which wee
might readily produce; instancing in such onely, as for
evidence are most *unquestionable*, and for consequence
most *comfortable*. And the nearer wee come, the more
will our ioy arise, and encrease vpon vs, by the bright
beames of that blessed and celestiall *light*, that shineth
from heaven so *gloriously*, in every severall *difference* and
advantage betweene their *best*, and our *worst* estate. For
you must know, that as the *difference*, so the *advantage*,
betweene our condition and theirs, is exceeding great,
and beyond all dimension, yet we will ayme and guesse,
as we are able, to *vnfold* such as we shall find most plain,
and most plentifull to our propose in hand. To come to
them then: The first is this.

1. *A childe of God is blessed in his worst estate, and an vn-*
godly man is accursed in his best.

Can there bee a wider difference, or a worthier advan-
tage then this? the difference betweene things *blessed* &
cursed of God, is the most that may be; for God makes
these two, the *utmost extremes*, both of all *naturall*, *spi-*
rituall, and *eternal* good, and evill, and the aduantage
is the same with the difference, that is to say, as much as
can be vttered or expressed: but let vs trie the truth here-
of in this particular, whereof we speake.

And that we may soone doe, for wee haue a most sure
word of our Lord and Saviour *Iesus Christ* to secure our
soules.

soules of the same, Looke we into that part of his owne most excellent sermon which we finde Luke 6. where he bringeth in, both the righteous, and the sinner, and presenteth either of them vnto vs, in their owne habite. Luke 6.

The godly at the worſt, ver. 20.21.22.23.

The vngodly at the beſt, ver. 24.25.26.

The former (viz: the faithfull) are considered in their Poverty, Hunger, Sorrow, and Contempt, but they are blessed in them all: no Poverty but blessed, [Blessed bee yee poore, ver. 20.] no Hunger but blessed, [Blessed be ye that hunger, ver. 21.] no Sorrow but blessed, [Blessed be yee that mourne, ver. 21.] no Contempt but blessed, [Blessed are yee when men revile you &c. ver. 22. 23.] And (beloved) are not they a blessed people, and their state blessed every way, whose very crosses, yea curses (as the world accounts them) are blessed? Can they want any thing to make them infinitely blessed, who see very want of some blessings is so blessed to them? Had not he [who is God to be blessed for ever] preached this point, who could haue consented, & set to his seale that it had beene true? but himself was hungry, and blessed; poore, sorrowfull, contemptible, and blessed in all these, he spake what himself in our nature did feele, & what his members (partakers of his nature) by grace should feele; to wit, that if the world & the diuell will keepe them every way perplexed; he will ever keepe them (as God his father kept him) happy and blessed. If they must be poore, and hungry, grived, & defamed, it shalbe.

Rom.1.15

Blessed hunger,

Blessed povertie,

Blessed reproach, and

Blessed griefe,

doe the world and the Divell what they can, when they haue done their worſt to Gods children, the worſt they

can doe, shall be well, and happy to them.

The latter (viz: the profane) they, (on the other side) are set out to the *utmost*, the *most* is made of them that can be, we haue them brought in ruffling in their *Riches, Society, colltie, and Honour*, but they are wofull in al these: no wealth but wofull, [*woe be to you that are rich: ver. 24.*] no fulnes but wofull, [*woe be to you that are full, ver. 25.*] no mirth but wofull, [*woe be to you that laugh, ver. 25.*] no honour, but wofull, [*woe be to you when men applaud you, ver. 26.*] And are not they a wofull people, to whom all *wealth and welfare is wofull* whose very *comforts & blessings* (as the world accounts them) are *accursed*? Can they want any thing to make them *infinitely miserable*, whose very *mercies*, are *miseries* to them? The Lord hath entayled an eternall *woe*, to all those things wherein they place their *welfare*. Their *blessings* and Gods *curse*, cannot be severed; they are simply inseparable, and shall so cleave, vnto each other for ever, that as they can haue no *joy* in any *happines appertayning to others*, so they shall haue none, in that which they possesse *themselves*; but whensoeuer they read, or heare any thing, out of Gods booke touching any temporall benefit comming towards them, it must be vnderstood with a *vengeance adhæring to it*, (so farre as their part goeth in it) before they shall enjoy it.

Now what a *mercy* is it, to haue every *bitter thing sweetned*, every *evil blessed*? And what a *miserie* is it to haue every *sweete thing poysoned*, every *good thing accursed*?

This is our *first advantage*, and the odds standing vp on these *tearmes*, of an *evill state blessed*, and a *good condition accursed*, every *idiot* would soone determine which of the *two*, to chuse; Is not a *good estate* to be desired on any *tearmes*, & a *bad, on none*? I think every man would be

be glad of a blessing vpon any condition, and enterteynce a curse, vpon none. And now judge (I pray you), betweene *Saints*, and *sinners*, which of both are in better case, howsoeuer it stand with either of them, in the best the one may haue, & the *worst* that can befall the other; and according to this apparent evidence, giue vpright sentence, whether the *most unhappie* among the children of God, be not in more happy case, then the *most happy* among the children of this world.

And thus farre concerning our *first* advantage. The *second* is this.

2. *A childe of God at his worst, hath no true, or reall evill upon him, but onely the appearance, or outside of the same.* 2. Advan-
tage.

A wicked man at his best, hath nothing but that which seemeth to be good, and is (indeed) evill.

And this advantage is most evident on either part, and vndeniable in both. For *first*, for the childe of *God*, he hath his part & interest in *Christ*, who having taken part of all the evils incident to the elect, hath by his own suffering and enduring of them, deprived them of their *venome & poysone*, pulled out their *sting*, and abolished whatsoeuer was *truely evill* in them, and *sanctified* them so, as that he *alone* did beare them as *curses*, we (at the *most*, and the *worst*) doe vndergoe them *onely as crosses*; *vnto him*, they were as iust punishments for vs, *vnto vs*, they are nothing but mercifull chastisements: they were due to him (in our *nature*) by law, and became part of the *malediction* Pro. 3. 13.
Heb. 12. 18. thereof; they come to vs, *onely as tokens of kindnes and loue*, so saith the spirit of God once and againe.

Againe, for the vngodly man, he is miserably gul'd, and cosned, as concerning his condition, having some things which *seeme* to be *good*, but being well sifted, and searched into, are found to be nothing but *reall evils*.

For

For why? we know, sinne and rebellion did not onely bring in *plagues, wants, and miseries*; but also it brought *mischefe, and rotteness, and wretcheaines*, vpon the good things God created for vs, and made them evill to vs, not in their *privation* alone, but even in our *possession* of them also, as was noted in the former advantage. Now this curse that by sinne cleaveth to the blessings of God, is (as was also aforesayd) inseparable, to the sinner; because his sinne is not remooved from him, or satisfied for him, by Christ, vnto God, in whom, he himselfe having no part or portion, but remayning vnder the power and rage of *sinne*, and right and possession of *Satan*, so doe also, all those things likewise which he doth enjoy, remayne vnder the malediction of *Almighty God*, and in them, he is as much deceived as he is in *himselfe*, who though he seeme to be, (at least to himselfe) *as good as any*, yea, *it may be better*, (in his owne conceit) then the *best* of the Lords beloved ones; is yet, but a *lymme* of *Satan*, an ympe of hell, and no such man as he made account he was. So that himselfe is *no such person*, and all he hath, are *no such things*, as they are conceited to be, being reputed good, but discovered to be starke naught. Looke what wee are before the Lord, such are all things to vs which we haue, they can be no other in his sight.

Note.

But shall we heare the *Holy Ghost* speake in this point, and that from them (or rather *in them*) whose experience doth *actually iustifie* that which we doe avouch. Looke (I pray) and obserue, yea admire, the Apostle Pauls evidence in this particular, he was a man that had tryed the *worst* that could be endured, and the *worst* (he saith) of that he felt, is onely *this*, that it onely *seemed* to be worse then *indeede* it was found to be; nay, (on the contrary,) that it was but a *shaddow* of evill, and a *meere appearance*

pearance thereof, without any substance, or reall fense of ^{2 Cor. 6. 8.} the same at all. Take we notice of his words, as we finde ^{9. 10. 11.} them, and we shall see this point impregnable; he speaks (purposely) of his miseries, persecutions, and distresses, of all sorts, and in them all, what saith he? why even this, that the *worst* of them were not the things themselues they seemed to be, but onely lome shewes, or outsides of them: their sorrow was no more but this, [*As sorrowing, and yet all wayes reioycing*] their povertie but this, [*As being poore, yet making many rich*] their want but thus, [*As having nothing, yet possessing all things*] and so of the rest, insomuch, that he breaks out most affectionately, ver. 11. *O Corinthians, &c.* As if he should say, Oh deare Christians, if you did but know how *well* it is with vs at our *worst*, how the Lord doth grossly infatuate the *Divell*, and befoole wicked men, in suffring them to conceit how vnhappie we are, through the evils they cast vpon vs; and how he doth graciously comfort vs, in taking away the *evill*, of all these *evils* from vs, so as that, wee are nothing so afflicted, or distressed, as they dreame vs to be, but (on the quite contrary) wee are cheared, comforted, and encouraged, that we can, and do reioyce exceedingly, in the vtmost extremities of *all*, that they are able by might, or malice, to inflict vpon vs: if this were but knowne to you as it is felt of vs, you would reioyce together with vs, and be perswaded (as we are) that no more misery can come to a true *Christian* for the profession of Religion, then may remayne, and well consort with all the ioy, peace, solace, and happinesse, which heart can wish. And in this declaration the Lord hath enlarged our hearts to tell you *that truth* which the world cannot receiue, nor beleeue; to wit, that the *worst* we can endure, may consist, with the *best* wee can desire. The *mischieves* men:

men bring vpon vs, of sorrow, want, &c. are but *Pictures* or *images* of these things; but the joy, fulnes, &c. the Lord giues in the middest of them all, are true; and reall, sound and substantiall consolations.

But now on the other side, for the vngodly, it is not so with them: all their good things are evills indeede, how good soever they seeme to be. Haue we not shewed them to be all in the generall denounced as curses to them, from Gods owne mouth, Deut. 28. And if we come to particulars, will not every severall blessing, prooue a curse vnto them, vpon due search?

Pro. 14.13. They haue *myrth*, but such as [*in the middest whereof the heart is heavie*], and doe they not droope many times inwardly, when outwardly they are frolike and ioyfull? God saith they doe, and some of them haue shewed it to be too true; it is but *mock-myrrh* they haue, lent them by *Satan*, to delude them a little while, and to be taken from them by *God*, at a moments warning, whensoevr he shall but offer to frowne vpon them in the least.

They haue *wealth*, (and the world sayes, that they who haue that, haue the blessing of God) but what is their wealth? *Seemingly good*, yea that which makes them the best men, in mens iudgement: but if you will be judged by *God*, who hath spoken it, he calls it by so many *odious Epithets*, as must needs perswade any man that it is nothing lesse then *good indeed*: take a few for a taste, is it not called

Hurtfull, Eccle. 5.12.

Deceitfull, Mat. 13. 22.

Dangerous, 1 Tim. 6. 17.

Filthy lucre, 1 Pet. 5. 2.

Vnrighteous mammon, Luk. 16.

With a multitude more of *most loathsome appellations*

to the same purpose, by any one of which, nothing that is truely good, was ever entituled.

And what we say of their wealth, and myrth, might be sayd of the honour, and pleasure, of these men, and of all their contentments whatsoever; all and every of which, vpon true and serious inquisition, would be found no such matters, as they are made account to be, in the weake imaginations of wicked men; but things, quite contrary to the great opinion they haue of them.

Now what a wide difference, and what a worthy advantage is here? that a childe of Gods worst, is but seeming evill, and true good, and an vngodly mans best, is but seeming good, and true evill? Surely a little deliberation would serue, to a full resolution of any mans choice of these two, which he would haue, whether the former condition, or the latter. And this is our second advantage. The third followeth. And that is this.

3. That the soule of a childe of God is safe, in the worst estate ^{3. Advan-} he can be in, in this life; but a wicked mans soule is in ^{tage.} most danger when his estate is at best.

Let the Lord speake for both, out of his blessed Word, we know he will not, nay, cannot but say true for either side. For the faithfull and their safetie first. Christ foretels Peter of as much misery as might befall him, when he signifies vnto him, that [*Satan had a desire to wyynnow him (with the rest) as wheate*] that is, throughly, exactly, to the vtmost; by which words he meant to giue Peter to understand what miseries he was like (for the truths sake) to vndergoe, and how it came to passe accordingly, by Gods permission of the Devill, and the power, and malice of his adhærents, the story of his deniall before Christ's death; and the relation of his life, and death, in the booke of the *Acts of the Apostles*, doth abundantly

Ver. 32.

evidence, and declare. But wherewith did Christ comfort Peter, when he told him of this outward discomfort and danger? why even with this very thing, [*But I haue prayed for thee, that thy faith faile not*] which was as much as to say; though many persecutions, and perils may surprize thee, to the endangering of thy life, even vnto the death, yet know, thy soules estate shall be secured, the power of grace *in thee*, the assurance of glory *to thee*, shall in no wise faile, that shall stand fast for ever, whatsoever becommeth of thy temporall part, which will perish.

Ioh. 10.

And not to Peter alone, was thus much spoken, but our Lord Iesus Christ layd as much to all that are of upright hearts, when he spake that Parable of the Shepheard and the Sheepe, whereof we reade in the Gospell. He compares himselfe to the good Shepheard, & his Saints, to his Sheepe: now because no creatures doe more mis-carry through the violence, crueltie, and outrage, of devouring beasts, then *sheepe* doe, and none are in so much danger to be torne in picces as they, and no *sheepe* that men haue, are in halfe the danger that Christ's *sheepe* are; Christ doth of purpose provide, to prevent (I say not the danger it selfe, as if he meant, that never, Wolfe, or Beare, should come neere his fold, but) that feare, that might follow the danger, wherevnto they are incident, saying.

Ver. 26.

[*my Father who gaue them to me is greater then all, and none can take them out of my Fathers hand*] As if he should tell them, it were very possible, easie, and ordinary, for tyrants to breake into the fold, and fetch away a *sheepe*, or two, and scatter (if not devoure) a whole flocke; but (sayth Christ) though your fleeces should be shorne, yea though your flesh should be torne, and you taken from house to house, yea from the earth; yet know, that your best part is safest, your soules shall none be able to touch, or take.

out.

out of my Fathers hand, who holdeth you fast, and will not let you goe from himselfe, vpon any tearmes; but will [hold you by his right hand, and guide you by his counsell, and afterwardes bring you to glory,] though it may be through the Butchers hands.

And the Apostle Peter himselfe tells vs, (it may well be out of the happy experience, of the feeling of that which Christ sayd to himselfe before) that the Saints of God in those times did reioyce (and that in the midst of many heavie temptations) with ioy unspeakable and glorious, because they were secured (touching their soules estate) of that immortall, and never fading inheritance, which was reserved for them (through the favour of God) in the heavens, and they preserved (through the power of God) vnto it. In some uncomfortable heavines they were, because of their present afflictions, but the ioy they felt by this blessed assurance of their soules estate, was so much, that it was unspeakeable.

But now for the vngodly and the sinner, on the other side, the case is altered with them in this thing; his bodie and state, may be both very secure, and every thing may goe with him, as hee would haue it, he may be planted, and rooted, and growe rancke and encrease mightily, in all contentments to the desire of his heart, but in the meane while, though all his externall things seeme to be built on the rocke, yet his soules estate is founded on the sand, and that so loosely, that every pufse of winde, every wawe of water, beares it downe, by reason of the perpetuall perill wherin it is.

We haue too many witnesses of this woful truth: A whole world fell at once, when they thought themselues firme, & fast in the daies of No:th; neither were the bodies of the

Psal. 73.
23. 24.

1 Pet. 4. 6. all neerer drowning, then the soules (I will not say of all, for the Apostle seemes to me, to controle it, but) of the most of them, were to damnation.

11a. 5. 15. The Prophet *Isaiah*, brings in a merry crew of such as neither cared for, nor feared, any thing, but passed their time with merriment and mislicke, and so exceeded in iollity as it past : but on a suddaine, the next newes we heare of these good-fellowes, is that [Hell had enlarged it selfe, and opened her mouth without measure to receive them] as if hell were hungry for them, and could not be satisfied till it had them ; and are not they in most danger, after whom hell is thus eager ?

The rich glutton in the Gospell, was so well lin'd, and growne so warme in his wooll, having jnn'd all his corne, enlarged every barne, and brought all things so about, that now he was at hearts-ease, and could let himselfe a lease for many yeares, of peace, safetie, fulnes, and all kinde of contentment ; as if he thought, that not a man among a thousand was better vnder-laid then himselfe, and that, *as David once dream'd* his rocke was made so strong, that there had beene no stirring of it ; alas, what plight was his soule in, all this while ? No sooner had he breathed out the words that argued his conceited safetie, but instantly another voyce was heard from heaven, a voyce dolefull, heavie, and terrible, arguing his dangerous, nay, his desperate, nay, his damned estate, now imminent, and hanging over his head, and immediately to be executed vpon him, [thou foole this night shall they take away thy soule] was ever man neerer mischiefe, that thought himselfe so farre from it ? he talkes of many yeares happiness ; God telis him of that perdition that the Prophet speakes of [destruction shall come vpon the wicked, and he shall not see the morning thereof] that is, such confusion as

shall soone come, and make quicke dispatch of all, when it doth come.

Thus are the soules of Gods Saints bōund fast vp [*in the bōundle of life*] by the Lord himselfe, the Lord of life; who hath *bound* himselfe, and his holinesse, to saue them wholy harmeles, at the *worst* that can come vnto them in this world. But for the soules of wicked persons, they are in wofull plignt, in their bodies best estate, and lie so scattered, neglected, & vregarded, (as things of naught) that *God* in iustice, lets them alone to be seized by *Satans* malice, to be a prey to that devouring Lyon, who will soone make everlasting havock of them in hell.

And this is the *third* difference, and the Saints *third* advantage, beyond all vngodly men, wherein how easie is it to determine, who hath the better end, or which is the happier state? any man that hath but a mans soule, induced with *reason*, will soone preferre safety to danger in themselues, but whosoever hath a Christians soule seasoned with *Religion*, will preferre the former vpon any tearmes, even the very *worst*, and accept the latter vpon no tearmes, no not the *best*. The *fourth* advantage followeth.

4. *A childe of God at the worst hee can be in, in this world* ^{4 Advan-}
hath no true cause of feare: And a wicked man at his best, ^{tage.}
is in a state most fearefull.

The most afflicted condition of the faithfull is voyd of feare, and the fayrest estate of a wicked man is full of feare. Gods booke giues abundant testimonie of both; fully freeing the Saint from feare, and filling the sinners heart with little else. Let vs take notice of that which is revealed for the people of God in this particular.

The Prophet *Isaiah*, foretels marveilous misery ^{May 43. 11.} vnto the Church, vnder the names of fire, and water, both ^{2. 3.}

which doe resemble, both great distresses, and great abundance of them also: you know they are merciles and outragious creatures, that doe wholy burne, and viterly ouerturne, all they preuaile vpon; and like vnto them must the calamities be, that are likened (to vs) by them. Now, though the very naming of fire, and water, of floods, and flames, (especially to this end, to be metaphors of more heavy miseries) were enough to terrifie and affright men, and to cause feare to overflow all hope of any happiness; yet the Lord will in no wise haue his children afraid, but layes it vpon them by expresse inhibition here, (as he also doth many a time else where) [*Feare not O Jacob my servant* [and because this might seeme an exceeding strange iunction, he giues them a strong and excellent reason for it: [*For I am with thee, the waters shall not drowne, the fire shall not burne thee &c.*] Behold, when he tels them of things most fearefull, he will not haue them feare at all.

And the *Apostle* is of the same mind, with the *Prophet*, writing to the *Church at Philippi*, (and in those daies, the times were terrible, tyranny and extreame persecution prevayled exceedingly vpon all such, as could be found to profess *Christianity*) and exhorting them [*in nothing to feare the adversaries*] (for [*our*] is not originally expressed). Obserue how generall the exhortation is, both touching the adversaries, and the things to be feared in them [*in nothing, feare the adversaryes*] let them be *who* they may be, never so merciles, feirce, or inhumane: let their rage be *what* it will be, never so vile, villanous, dyreful, yea diabolical, yet whē both are come to the *most, & worst*, that can be, neither is worth fearing.

In like manner, *John* writing to the *Church of Smyrna* giues them the same comfortable counsell, and encouragement

ragement, against their persecutions now approaching, saying, [*Feare nothing that thou shalt suffer*] and yet he tells them that their tribulation shall be so extreame, and extraordinary, as if the *divell* were broke loose among them, and come from *hell it selfe*, to make the earth a kinde of *hell* vnto them, (for in what fence their tormentors are called *Divels*, their torments may be called *hell*) and yet he would not haue them feare, at all, though he tell them of that which would feare, yea affright, yea (almost) amaze any body, to thinke that their enemies are *divells*, that is, so exceedingly surpassing and beyond all ordinary oppressors, that none is *bad enough* to represent them, but the *divell* himselfe.

These are the generall acquittances that the Lord hath given his servants to free them from all feares in al afflictions : yea, let them seeme never so fearefull, or *infernall*, they are not all of them (no not at the worst) worth fearing in the least. [*Thou drewest neere* (saith good *Ieremiah*) *in the day of my trouble*, and *sayd'st unto me Feare not*, Lam. 3.55. and that when I was, *in the low dungeon*.] [*Though I walk* 56.57. *in the valley of the shadow of death*, (that is, in the most uncomfortable state of death it selfe) *yet I will feare no evill*] saith good *David*. And in a word) our *Lord Iesus* Psal. 23.4. *Christ* gaue this for one among those many most gracious lessons he left behind him, [*Feare not them*, (let the men be as many, as mighty, as malicious, as they may be) *that can kill the body*] (be their maner of killing, as tyrannous, torturous, yea barbarous, and cruell as it can be) as if hee would say, neither persecutors, nor persecutions of any kinde, are cause of any feare in the faithfull; hee who spake it (as *man*) well knew what hee sayd, (as *G d*) and therefore we stand bound to obey him as *Christ*, both *God* and *man*; knowing right well, that if any thing.

thing in mans power, might haue beene iust matter of feare, to the faithfull, hee would not haue layd this injunction vpon them ; but being *man*, and acquainted with humane frailety, and being *God*, having command ouer such corruptions, as hee knew would flow from the same ; he forbids *all feare, in all cases*, because no such feare in vs, can consist with the freedome of his graces ; for as true *love*, so true *faith* [*casteth out feare*,] & so doth every saving grace which he hath giuen vs.

But now on the other side the feare of the profane doth overflow him at his *left*, and in the fullest stremes of his externall happines, it breakes in vpon him to the disturbance of his heart, yea to the fearefull destroying of himselfe, even when he feares nothing.

Pharaoh followed *Israell* with a resolved mind to repossesse and re-enslauie them vnto him for ever, he hath all the successe, heart can wish, the sea is holden vpp for him, by the same *miraculous* hand of the *Almighty*, which kept it for his owne people to passe ouer, why should he feare any *ordinary* danger of drowning who had an *extraordinarie* meanes of preservation ? and now that hee sees God to seeme (at least) to favour him, he is bold & adventurous, and feares not, but hee may follow them close ; but you know the fearefull issue of this feare-les attempt, to wit, his owne, and his peoples helpeles overthrow, in the midst of that sea, wherin he supposed himselfe as safe, as Gods Saints were, and besides the woefull perishing of his body, the losse of his soule was most heavy of all.

Belshazzar, was were he would be (you know) when hee had his Princes, his Peeres, his Wives, and Concubines, about him, to *quaffe, swill, and carouse*, in the sacred vessells of Gods houle ; how *frolike, ioyfull, and merry* that

that King was, we may easily conceiue, and how farre he had put away all feare of any dismall accident from him, we may also well imagine. Howbeit beholde, when he suspected, nay surmized, nothing, that might any way disaffect, much lesse amaze him, he hath such a suddaine, and dreadfull obiect in his eye, as the like hath never beene heard, or read off before; a mooving hand, writing *wofull things* against him on the wall; and therewith was he so distempered, terrifid, and in such a taking, as his *chattering teeth*, his *throbbeing heart*, his *knecking knees*, (and the rest of his *quaking members* though not mentioned) may signifie the state of his perplexed spirit, and distracted minde.

It were most easie to multiply many of this fearefull crew, whom the Lord hath accursed many wayes, and among the rest, with such forlorne, nay infernall feares, as many a time are threatned vnto them from him, who is *F E A R E* it selfe, even the most fearefull and terrible *G O D*, who hath shewed all men, how farre he can, and doth, and will, forever, keepe them (even at their best) vnder the bondage of *bise feare*; shewing himselfe vnto them evermore, both in his *word*, by those terrifying titles of a *Judge*, an *Avenger*, a *Consuming fire*; and in his *worke*, by those amazing, and soule-distracting *accidentis*, which doe most vnexpectedly overtake them, and are (as it were) the very *beginnings* of hell-vnto them, wherein there shall be an infinite and endles (I say not *consummation*, but) *combination*, of all fearefull things for ever to abide, and abound, vpon them.

And this is the *fourth difference*, betweene the righteous and the irreligious, and the *fourth advantage* wee (who are Gods) haue of the other. The faithfull are free from feare, the profane are full of it; it hath scarce,

And ought not to haue at all) a being, in those that are the Lords, and belong to his loue, and in the rest nothing is more powerfull, not onely being in them, but being the greatest predominant that beareth rule, and overbeareth; both themselues (and that when they are best at ease,) and all those things wherein they do most boast, and blesse themselues, as their manuer is to do. And which of these two to take, is most easily, and quickly determined, by any man who is not feared out of his wits. The first advantage followeth.

5. Advanc-
eage.

5. That the very worst that ever befell any child of God in this world, was sent of purpose to prevent the worst of all, (viz : perdition in the world to come) but the best that ever wicked man had, was but to helpe him the neerer to hell.

2 Cor. 11.
32.

The Scripture is plaine and plentifull for either part, we will take a tast of both. The Apostle writing to the *Corinthians* (& in them to all true *Christians*) doth assure vs that what correction or chastisement, we endure here, is to sauе vs from confusion for ever, [we are (sayth he), chastened of the Lord, that we might not be condemned with the world, the Lord doth, as good parents, doe to bad children, bestow many a whipping vpon vs, to sauе vs from hanging ; his sharpest rod, is but to prevent a sharper sword, is it not better to smart then to bleed, or to bleed a little by the gracious hand of a good father, then to bleed to death by the severe hand of a rigorous executioner ?

Psal. 118.
17.

Surely there was somewhat in it, that David tels vs it was so [good for him that he had beene affliction,] which intimates he had beene in an ill case, if it had not beene so : And what may be that [sweete fruit that comes to such as haue beene (not once, (or so) smitten, but) excercised often under affliction ?] if it be not this we speake of ? Or what colour

Heb. 11.8.

colour of reason can be rendred, why we should not onely reioyce, but even glory in tribulation, if it were not a sanctified and assured means to escape destruction? [Thy Rod and thy Staffe (saith good David) they comfort me.] Why? how so? it were a sencelesse speech and vntrue, if he had not told vs before, that the Lord was his Shepheard, and dealt with him as carefull Shepheards doe, vse the rod, & staffe, to saue them from the beare, and wolfe, and therupon he tels vs, that no danger can affright him, because the Lord (by correction) delivers him, from the ruine whereinto els he would run: Better the Shepheard smite, then the wolfe bite; they are good stroakes that keepe vs from the pawes and iawes of the devourer. And this was smelt of one of *Jobs* friends long before these dayes, who tels him, (and God tels vs in him) that when the Lord meaneth to [saue a mans soule from the pit, &c. he chasteneth him with paine, &c.] scourging him severely, that he may saue him graciously: And wherin, but in this alone, could his loue unto vs, and his chastisement of vs, goe together?

Iob. 33.18.
19.

But on the vngodly mans part, you haue heard before, that his best estate helpest him to hell, nothing doth more further his eternall misery, then the things he accounts his greatest mercy. What said the Lord to *Isaiah*: [Make the heart of this people fat, their eares heavie, &c.] Let them remaine insensible of any instruction, incapable of any humiliation; stirre them not, never trouble them, but give them their owne way and will, that they may be at hearts ease; but to what end is all this granted? why, that their endlesse misery may be hastened, to prevent their salvation, which they refused, to procure their damnation which they deserved. And the same sayd *Christ* (out of this Prophet) to those of his time, who resting in the same condition, were reserved to the same destruction.

Job. 21.11. Doe we not reade of some that were free from all miseries, and had a kinde of exemption from all afflictions, 12. 13. all their dayes, and passed their time as merrily, as ever men did, (in ryot and revelling,) and the next newes we heare of them, is their everlasting overthrow for ever Luk. 16.25. and ever? What was it which was layd to Dives being in hell-torments, even this, [*Thou in thy life time hadst thy pleasure, &c: but now thou art tormented.*] As if he should say, thy pleasure, ease, delicacy, &c. were the things that halterred this perdition wherein thou art. And you must imagine this one to be the embleme, or person representatiue of all that Great ones that ever came or shall come into hell : nothing is a surer Harbinger of eternall damnation to an vngodly man, then his freedome from temporall affliction.

16. 5.15. Did you not heare before, that [*Therefore hell had enlarged her selfe and opened her mouth, &c.*] Because it seemed most greedy to devoure the fittest, and greatest, of those that were never taken downe, nor abated, by any earthly calamitie, as if such men were the sweetest morsels, hell could haue?

Rey.7. 14. And doe you not reade againe on the contrary ; that, 15. [*Therefore the Saints of God are in his glorious presence day and night for ever, and ever, and haue all teares wiped from their eyes,*] because they came out of great tribulation and persecution, and had beeene so miserably handled here in this world, that being so thynre, and leane, so poore, and bare, for Christ, they might the better (even for that caule) come to be partakers of this celestiall blessednes with Christ.

And this is the first difference, and the Saints first advantage, and it is no meane, but a mighty oddes that wee haue of them herein : Our temporall misery preventeth

our eternall; their temporary happiness doth hasten their everlasting misery. What man *is his right minde*, would not soone say, which of the two he would take, whether the *worſt* of this world, with assurance of *no evill* in that which is to come; or that which may be *best* here, with certaintie of the *worſt* that hell can yeeld him afterward. Alwayes we see, a childe of God at his *worſt*, hath his *best* estate behind, and a wicked mans *worſt* is to come, when he hath had the *best* this world could affoord him. This earth is *our hell*, (even all the hell we shall haue;) *heaven* shall surely follow it. It is *their heaven*, (even all the *heaven* they can haue) and *hell* must be, shall surely ensue, and succeede it. And this is our *fiſt* advantage. The *ſixt* and *laſt* followeth, and that is this.

6. That a childe of God at his *worſt*, even in all his *evill* ^{6 Advan-}
 whatſoever, is evermore in actuall poſſeſſion of all his ^{rage.}
 excellencies: but a wicked man, hath nothing but ignominy and basenes, *at his best, even in all his honours.*

Take a childe of God, and conceit him to be cloathed with all the calamitie and contempt, you can imagine; suppose him vnder all the reproach and misery, that is possible to be put vpon him, yet now in G O D S account he is,

A childe of God,
An heire of heaven,
A coe-heire with Christ,
A King, and more then a Conquerour.

And indeede more then can be vttered by vs, or conceived by himselfe, according to that of the Apostle: [we are now the ſonnes of God, but it doth not appeare what we ſhall be.] As if he ſhould ſay, we know we haue a ſtate to come, whose excellency cannot be knowne here; all the world cannot devise a name good enough to declare

^{1 Joh. 3. 2.}

it; the vtmost here is to be called *the sonnes of God*; but what we shall be, is such a state as can be called by *no name on earth*, we haue [*a life which is hid with Christ in God*] and till he be revealed from heaven, at his second comming, the glory of this our condition cannot be discovered.

But on the other side, how base and worthlesse, contemptible and contumelious, is every vngodly man, in the middest of all his glory and renowne, and all the applause the world puts vpon him? he that takes notice by what tearmes the *Holy Ghost* doth enstile them, cannot but say, we say the truth, at least in part; for their *full infamy* being *infinite*, that is also reserved, till the *infirite honour* of the elect shall be manifested. In the meane time are they not called,

Children of hell,

Slaves of Satan,

Vile persons,

Dogs, swine, vipers, yea Divils.

With many other more, of the like loathsome kinde, inspired by the Lord, penned by his secretaries, recorded in his scriptures, preached by his messengers, and remaining for ever, as the righteous brands, and most proper appellations, that God himselfe hath put vpon them, & which they must beare from him, who is *too great, and too good, to vsay, one iot, or tittle, of that he hath spoken.*

To instance particular persons were to little purpose, all that are mentioned by name, or comprehended, and meant, in that pecreles Catalogue which we haue in this Chapter, though they were exposed to the worst and vtmost contempts that could be, for *infamy*, and to the most tyrannous and villanous torments that could be for *extreamitie*; yet the *worst word* wee heare of them is this:

[All

[All these dyed in the faith, and obtained a good report.] And *vers. 13.*
 againe [Of whom the world was not worthy] *loc. a world* ^{39.}
 [nay more then a world) of honour, in two or three
 words, for the whole world, (to wit, of worldly and vngodly persons,) is not valued at the worth of one childe of God, *vers. 38.*
 no not by God himselfe, who hath bought them at a high price, yet gaue no more for them, then he thought them worth, and hath made knowne their worth to the world, by the price he bestowed on them, *viz.* the most precious bloud of his onely Sonne, which it pleased him not to think too good, to be given for the purchase of their redemption, and glory. So that they are not over valued, at this invaluable rate, seeing the most wise God out of his owne wisedome, and loue, hath set thus much vpon them, and in not accounting the world worthy of them, hath also pleased (through the merits of the Lord that bought them) to accouē them worthy of the world to come, and of all that glory, immortallitie, life, and blessednes there, which all the wit, reason, and vtmost reach, of mortall man, is not so much as able once to guesse at; for it being so absolutely infinite, it doth infinitely surpass all possibilitie of man to ayme at it, much leſſe comprehend.

On the contrary now, where shall the vngodly and the sinner appeare? or what shall be accounted of them, if the Lord come to giue sentence vpon them at the *very best* of their estate? What are they worth? how are they esteemed before him? why *nothing*, *vanitie*, *yea, leſſe then nothing*, *lighter then vanitie*; more vile then the basel vermine they tread vpon, yea more vile then the earth which harboureth both them and all base vermine whatsoeuer; no creature so bad as they, vpon the whole earth, onely the *Devell* in hell, he is somewhat worse, & by how much he is worse then they, (because he made them naught,) *by*

Rev.

Psal.
Isa. 40.

by so much are they worse then all other creatures, who were by them, and for their sakes, *accursed*.

To bee entituled *dogs, swyne, vipers* and such like, is onely to shew their basenes, as these creatures seeme to vs, not as they are in themselues; for so saith *Job*, [they are not to be compared to the dogs of my flocke;] for thele creatures, God made them exceeding good, onely sin (their sin) hath made them so naught, as wee vsually account them to be, in them selues they haue no sinne, nor ought els that is bad, but onely by them, by whose sins they are corrupted, and degenerate from that noble excellency, and those notable qualities of their nature, which once they had, when they had an estate as pure in nature, as wee our selues in our created condition. Now therefore as the *Diveil* onely is worst of all, because he made wicked men so bad, so they (next him) are the worst in the world, because all other things are imbased by them.

Besides, take the *mightyest* among the men of the world, haue not their names perished with them? and are become as rotten as their bodyes? yea worse? because wheras the *carkease* is consumed in the earth and annoyes none, their name liues like *carryon* aboue ground vnburyed, & flinks more, and more strongly from one age to another, and shall liue to rott through all generations to come for euer, till they shall be againe rayfed out of rottennes, to liue and meeete their living *loathsome* names before the Lords iudgements seate, who shall then, and there, put an end to both, by throwing both, into the bottomlesse pit of endles perdition, they being the men that must rise (to fall) to everlasting shame and contempt.

To particulate *Cayne, Saul, Abitophell, Ahab, Iudas*, or the rest of that *bead-role* of branded persons whom the living and most glorious *God*, hath marked for remarkable

able infamy, were not to much purpose, and we haue had occasion to note them before: it sufficeth to know, that their glory is with shame, and that all the reputation they haue had with men at the greatest, hath but made their reproach greater with God. Men haue heaped honourable titles of greatnes vpon them to dignifie and renowne them, which haue beeene but the poore vapours of their ayery words, breathed out either for feare or for flattery, and haue vanished in the very vtterance; & God hath laden them with heavy, and most ignominious appellations; which his mouth having spoken, and his pen having written, must remayne to cleave for ever, vnto that most vnworthy, and miserable memoriall which the world hath of them, who knowes them by no names, or titles, but onely by those that are worse then none at all.

And touching both (in this last difference) it may be well and safely observed, that the worse words the world hath given Gods Saints, the better and more glorious titles are given them of God himselfe: and the more men haue renowned the other, the more hath the Lord abhorred them, and made them abominable, to all eyes & eares.

His owne Sonne (our Saviour) when in the dayes of his flesh he dwelt among vs, had as bad, yea, and farre worse language given him, then any that ever lived; he that reades his life, knowes how of he was abused, and most basely vilified, *he was a Samaritane, he was mad, he had a divell, &c*: but the Lord God (his father, and our John 20. father,) hath given him a name aboue all names, and honor ^{17.} and glory aboue all principalities and powers; and so much the more gloriously exalted him, by how much among men he was become the scorne, and contempt of the people. And in like maner doth he deale with *Christians*

stians (as he did with Christ) according to the eminency of their pietie (for which, the greater it is, they suffer greater reproach,) he giues them more excellent glory, even in the eyes of men, as we might shew in many examples. And this is our *sixt* and last *Advantage*.

And now (beloved and longed for in the Lord) what shall we say to these things? here we haue had a *short*, and *summary* survey of those singular, and celestiall adyantages, that the Lords people haue, (even at their *worſt*) of all vngodly men at their *best*. I say a *short* and *summary* survey of them, for if we should enlarge our selues in the discovery of them so farre as we might, *when* should we have done? or *where* should we end? or, if we could manifest them as they are, (*which mortalitie cannot doe*) there could be neither end, nor measure, of our Discourse; nay, it might be truely sayd of these excellent things, as the *Evangelist* speaketh of the rest of the acts, and sayings of Christ, which are written, that [*the whole world would not containe the bookeſ, &c.*] that must containe, the full declaration of those infinite things, wherein the true comfort of the Saints doth consist; for they are (in truth) *vnutterable*, nay indeed, *unsearchable*, as the *Apostle* doth plainly signifie when he sayth [*he heard (being wrapt into the third heaven) things not to be uttered.*] And if of the mysteries and secrets of the Gospell (which els-where he speaketh of,) much more may it be most truely sayd of the consolation, benefit, and reward of the *faithfull* and persecuted professors of the same, that they are such [*As eye hath not ſeene, eare hath not heard, nor haue entred into the heart of man to apprehend,*] the *naturall* man is meant in the former, the *spirituall*, may be vnderſtood in the latter. For *grace* is as *vnable* (*mixt with infirmitie*) to comprehend *heavenly* things that are *gloriosus*, as *nature* (*voyde of grace*)

grace) is, to conceiue aright, and reach those that be *hol-
y* and *gracious*. Why then, what shall we say to these
heavenly things, thus *heaped vp* together, to make vs
wholy happy? If the Lord haue laid them vp in *his booke*,
should not we lay them vp in *our bosomes*? And blesse him
abundantly who hath so over-abundantly blessed vs with
these benedictions, which are sent vs, so to sweeten the
bitterest cup of our calamitie, that we might drinke the
bottome of it with all chearfulness and reioycing? what
sayd the good Prophet of God once, in a case of this
kinde, [*Reioyce O heaven, and be ioyfull O earth, breake forth
into prayses O yee mountaines, for the Lord hath comforted his
people, and shewed mercy upon his afflicted*] and even this,
may and ought all Gods people now to speake (concer-
ning the premisses) in the particulars that we haue re-
vealed.

How came the *good Christians* of the primitiue times,
when persecution was so sore and extreame, not onely
(as was noted before) [to reioyce, but even to glory in
tribulation?] [to suffer with ioy (yea with much ioy)
the spoiling of their goods?] To goe from the *Consistory*
with bloudie shoulders, yet [*glad hearts, reioycing that they
were accounted worthy to undergoe the worst for Christ?*]
And the Apostle who was so abundant, aboue all the
rest, (not onely in the *labours*, but in the *sufferings* of the
Gospell, also) telleth vs plainly [*Great is my reioycing, I am
full of comfort, I haue (not onely abundantly ioy, but)
joy over-abundant in all my tribulations.*] These are strange
words, yet true, and such as he saith, he hath alreadie
in possession, and not onely in some lighter afflictions,
but in his *heaviest* distresses, even in all his tribulati-
ons;

To haue Great ioy,

Rom. 5. 3.
Heb. 10. 34.
Act. 5. 40.
41.

2 Cor. 7. 4.

To be full of comfort, yea

To be over-full, or to over-abound;

is such a strayne of speech, as never fell from man, by any sence or reason of flesh and bloud, but onely from the spirit of God, and the power of his grace, which had persuaded his soule of the sweetnesse of this saving truth that we teach; that a man at his *worſt* should not onely be full, but over-flow with comfort and ioy, which is more then any wicked man can say of his *beſt*, for all the happiness vnder heaven cannot fill, much leſſe over-fill the heart of man, he cannot be ſatiſhied, much leſſe can he be gluttied indeede, or ſurfeſt in truth, with all temporall delights, he that had the largest ſhare in them of any *mortal man* that ever lived, (even *Solomon*) tells vs they can-
not give full contentment, and againe [the eye cannot be ſatiſhied with ſeeing, nor the eare with hearing, &c.] but here,

at our *very worſt*, we haue our measure of ioy and ſolace, preffed downe to the bottome, filled vp to the brim, and running over vpon vs, from the Lord, who telleth vs, that theſe light and ſhort troubles, (doe not onely thus conſiſt with our great reioycing here present, but)

² Cor. 4. 10. they [procure unto vs in heauen, an exceeding excesſive (for ſo the words doe ſound in their true ſence) eternall waigſt of glory:] Loe, what words the *Holy Ghost* vſeth to exprefſe theſe things to vs, [exceeding,] [excesſive,] to giue vs to know, that theſe being the *greateſt words* which can ſhew any thing to vs, the things intended in them, are *greater then all words can exprefſe*.

And why then doe we droope, or faint vnder any thing (dearely beloved?) how ill doth ſorrow or feare (of this

¹ Thes. 5. 16. sort) become a *Saint*? who is not onely commanded to [reioyce in the *Lord*, euermore,] but hath reaſon given ^{Phil. 4. 13.} him ſo to doe, in the things (thus farre) declared by vs.

Questi-

Questionlesse, if we could settle our thoughts vpon these divine things, they would produce very divine effects in our hearts, and put vs (as it were) into heaven before-hand, (*in part,*) and make vs much the more meete, for the absolute possession of the perfections thereof in due time.

And this is the *first use* of this most worthy point of truth, wherein though we have seemed long to infest; yet know, it is such good being here, (as Peter once sayd) that wee could even build Tabernacles in the blessed comfort of the same, as finding it to be much harder to *get out*, then to *goe on* further in the discovery hereof, wherein a faithfull man is (after a sort) *transfigured*, and mounted aloft farre beyond all *mortalitie, misery, & vexation*, of men, or devils in this world; which now, (thus raysed) either he seeth not, or if he do, he beholdeth them as faire vnder his feete, with a Christian, and holy contempt, and himselfe hath (his heart being settled on these things) his seate *on high* with the Lord, and his blessed and beloved ones, vnto whom he seemeth to be translated, in the sweete apprehensions of his soule, while he is conversant in these sacred, and supernaturall meditations; and beholdeth the glorious face of God, shining vpon him, and his owne heart so dazeled with the heavenly *lustre* of this most blessed light, that he cannot well tell (for the time) where he is, whether *in the body or no*, his soule soaring aloft, and finding such inconceivable contentment in these consolations.

But we must put an end to our discourse of these comforts, and leave the rest, to that time when we shall come into *actual* and full possession of *endlesse life*, where wee shall enjoy the infinite fulnesse of those things, whereof, all that can be sayd of the *best* things that are here, are,

but the beginnings, and first fruits, of that which we shall haue there.

2 Use.

Terror to
Persecutors

And so we come to a second use of this blessed truth which concerneth wicked men, vnto whom wee must change our note, and sing another tune, from the true consequence of the same ; for it soundeth (as all heavenly truth doth) *heavily*, in their cares, and was not more sweetely musicall to the Saints, then it is *dolefully miserable*, to sinners. We neede not say much to them, the losse of all the aforesayd happines and felicity of the faithfull, is more then a little, inasmuch as we haue seene, (as wee haue gone all a-long from one passage to another,) their misery and vnhappines, hath still beene entwisted (oppositely) to the ioy of Gods chosen, and entayled thereunto ; so that they are not onely *deprived* of so much ioy, as hath appeared to the faithful in every particular, from point to point ; but are further *assured* of as many, and as great mischeifs, as our mercies doe amount vnto; every comfort to vs, carrying with it a curse also vnto them.

Yet over and above all that wee haue sayd, there is somewhat more falling vpon them, (to their further terror) from this truth ; and that is meant vnto the persecutors and tormentors of Gods people, who doe full often affright, and terrifie, those whom they haue in their power, with big, and bitter words, with cruell, and cursed speakings ; viz : that *this*, and *that* they will doe, & they shall, (I, that they shall) well know, that it is in their power to exercise their pleasure, and to haue their will vpon them : Iust, as insolent and imperious as Pilate, [knowest thou not that I haue power to binde thee, &c,] and these tyrants will impryson, will torture, will kill, what will they not doe ? and what shall not Gods childe endure, if either *vile words*, or *villanous deedes*, may put them into dread,

dread, distraction, yea, desperation?

But wilst thou know, O thou vaine man], and vile mis-
creant, how idly all this is vttered to terrifie him, who
can by vertue of the glorious light of this gracious truth,
triumphantly retort all this vpon thy selfe, to thine owne
terror and amazement of heart, and tell thee to thy
teeth, that seeing the *worst* of Gods childe is better then
the *best*, of any wicked man, therefore all thou canst say,
or doe, cannot make him halfe so miserable as thy selfe
art, who doest thus menace the members of *Jesus Christ*.
When thou hast spent out all thy malice, syued vp all the
venyme, spent, and emptyed vpon them, all the malig-
nity and gall the Divell ever engendered, and encrea-
sed in thee; yet even then, thou hast not made him halfe
so *unhappy*, as thou now art in thy *conceited hoppes*,
and exemption, from all these extreamityes.

And the poore distressed *Martyr* of the *Lord Jesus*,
may say in the tryumph, of a true and powerfull faith, O
Tyrant, or *Oppressor*, know, that now in this agony, in these
anguishes, I will not change states with thee, my case is better
then thine, al thou c. not doe, cannot make me so bad as thy self,
my tortures are to bee preferred to thy pleasures, my racks,
chaynes, scourges, &c. cannot mak me so miserable, as thy pa-
lace, prosperity, ease, honour, and power makes thee: I am more
joyous vnder all these great grievances, then thou canst bee in
all thy greatest glories: doe thou persecute I will icy, doe thou
afflict I will pray; smite thou, I will smile; my God hath laid
a sweete, a soveraigne, a healing, yea a heavenly plaister, to
all these bitter sores, which fully cures them, and comforts
me. namely, that he hath taught me to learne, that which now,
I have leyned to feele, that my *worst estate*, is better then thy
best, the sweetnes of which lesson, makes all evills easie to swal-
low, and of quicke, and comfortable digestion, even at the ex-
treamest,

James 2.20

treamest, that they can be. And herein I say, and will say, maugre all the divells in hell, and hell-hounds on earth.

Would not this, (or the like speach vnto this) make the ears of Tyrants to tingle, and their hearts to tremble? would it not vexe and torture their very spirits within them, to heare these voyces sounding from the mouths of those, who are vnder their heavy vexations?

Certainely, it would worke one way or other with them, if they could but beleue it; either it would cause repentence vnto salvation, and make them weary of their wickednes, & most willing to become as one of them whom they thus abuse; or to fret and fume, and gnaw out their owne bowels, to see themselues defeated in all the impious purposes, which being to make the Lords people most miserable of all men, can not by the *most*, and *worst*, and *all*, they can doe, make them any way so miserable as themselues, who (*in their owne opinion*) are more happy then any. Doe you thinke it would not make their hearts to boyle, yea to burne within them, and chafe them so throughly, that they should bee forced to foame at mouth, with indignation, and distemper? Were a man but in their bosomes, to see how they fret, and vexe inwardly, when they perceiue, *God himself* to laugh them to scorne in heaven, and *his people* to laugh at them on earth, to see, that all the mallice and villany the Divil can arme them withall, cannot make anothers estate *at worst*, so bad then their owne, *at best*; then would something appeare, as the effect and efficacy of this truth, which wee haue told them, it may be they would cease their bloody hands against the blessed of the Lord, and begin to lay them on themselues, as *Iudas*, (and some other of their *predecessors*,) haue done. But our *God*, the *God of heaven*, doth suffer the *Divel*, the *[God of this world*

to blind-fold their eyes that they should not see,] or know, or acknowledge this truth, and so by the ignorance thereof, they worke out, at once

Their owne perdition, and
Our salvation, and make
Vs, blessed Martyrs,
Themselues, accursed Malefactors,

Phil. 1, 28.

in despight of all that they (contrarily) intend ; and hereof, if they might, or could be perswaded, no question were to be made, but they would quickly become, either better, or worse. But it is misery enough that they cannot be brought to beleue the same; oh, what faith the Apostle [*If our Gospell be hid, it is hid to them that are lost :*] A² Cor. 4, 5. heavie sentence, inasmuch as by ignorance (especially wilfull of any truth, more sinne is multiplied against God, more service, is done to the Divell, more mischiefe to men, and (consequently) more plagues heaped on, and wrath stored vp against the day of wrath, to be powred by the mightie arme of Almighty God, vpon the heads of all those, that haue thus encreased their impieties before him, who shall notescape the full poyson of all those his envenomed vialls which he hath revealed from heaven, to be reserved in hell for them. Rom. 2.

But we will now leaue these men, as men left of God, and not so happie as once to giue vs the hearing, or the Lord, the beleeming of this truth ; but given over to be drunke with their owne delusions, to their owne damnation, perswading themselves so well of their owne evill estate, and being so ill perswaded of the good, and blessed condition of Gods children, that they meane to continue as they are, and to proceede in their impietie against the Lord, & oppression against his people, till they haue wrought out, their owne eternall confusion by both, and

provoked the dreadfull indignation of the *Lord God*, to come vpon them to the vttermost, through this *double iniquitie*, committed against his highest Maiestie.

3. Vse. And in our *last vse* we will turne our speech to all *Instruction* manner of persons, endevouring to doe our best, to giue *to all men* them that true information, which floweth from this Point whereof we now treat, and the premisses of the same, which haue beene so particularly and plentifully related, at large vnto vs.

And the consequence of this truth for matter of instruction, looketh *both* at the Saints of God *themselves*, *and also* at all *others*, that are not yet revealed to be such.

For the *former*, viz: those who haue beene already found and approoved to be faithfull, whose happy interest is therefore vndeniable in this heavenly truth, it calls for their constant, contingall, and perpetuall *perseverance*, in that their estate of grace and holinesse, the *worſt* whereof, is so good, as we haue heard. For if our first being in grace (while we are yet but *babes*, or *beginners* therin) do give vs assurance of so much consolation, doubtles, if wee continue and hold out to the end, as we grow, and goe on, in grace, so doth the sweete favour of this happinesse encrease and multiply vpon vs. But I hope the discouery of the comforts aforesayd, is such, as may ſave me the labour, of any further preſſing of this point vpon them, and that their ſtate of the blessedneſſe of them is ſo pleasant, as they haue ſenſible *Argu- ments* within them ſufficient, both to perſuade them to carry where they are; and to oppoſe, and repulſe all ſuggeſtions to the contrary. And therefore I will not perſue them with more words, for whose ſakes eſpecial- ly, all that is paſt, hath beene vittered, and whose ſetled *resolutions* touching their ſtate of grace, are ſuch, and

so vnmoveable as was the *Apostles*, who sayd, [*I am sure*, Rom.8.38; *that neither death, nor life, nor Angells, nor Principalities, 39.* nor Powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate me from the loue of God, which is in Jesus Christ our Lord.] This was his, of himselfe, and the *Romanes*; this is, and ought to be ours, of our selues, and of all true *Christians*; and therein we will rest, and turne our last speech, vnto those that yet are not turned to the Lord, by any visible manifestation of that faith, the vertue wherof, doth giue them their part, and portion in the saving peace, & comfort of that which hath beene vttered.

And what can we vrge (either more, or lesse) vpon them, then that they should now (at last) learne to leaue their former sinfull, and vngodly condition, and cleave to the Lord, in the power and truth of sinceritie, and sanctification; that in as much as they are not yet *Canonized* of the Lord for Saints, nor haue their names written in the booke of life, (so farre as their life sheweth vnto men) they might now (once) bethinke themselues what they are, and come out of that estate, wherein they cannot be happy.

And what more weightie, or worthy argument can we vse, then this which is so powerfull to perswade, if it be duely pondered of them : For it is drawne from that which nature affecteth, and desireth (in all men) aboue all things, to wit, the having of a good, yea the best estate, and condition, that is to be had in this world, & a much more better, in heaven, then can be had vpon any termes here. And can there be a better estate, then that? or any so good as that? which

*Is impossible to be bad, at the worst, and
The worst whereof, is better then the best of any other.*

Beholde, out of this estate *all prosperitie is misery*, and in it, *all misery is prosperitie*: haue we not made it more then manifest, by such abundance of most infallible, divine, and *undoubted* evidence, as neither *divels*, nor men, can colourably gainesay? And is not such a state worth seeking among those to whom it is *solely*, and *wholly*, appropriated of the Lord? Who would not be a *Saint* vpon such tearmes, and embrace pietie, because of the precious and peerelesse *blessednesse*, it brings with it, vpon a mans *vniversall* state here, and that which is *eternall* in Heaven? Why, let men learne to reason and dispute thus.

If there be a sort of people, who are in such a state as hath beene sayd, the *worst* whereof is *simply good*, and incomparably *better* then the *best* estate of any other whatsoever; what doe I, what am I, out of that societie? I see my selfe miserable (as I am) at *my best*, I will surely out of my selfe, and striue with all my strength to be one of those men, among whom the *meanest* fare so well, when they are in the *worst* estate that can be.

And if (thus) God make vs able to beginne to argue (for his glory) against our selues, when these first propositions be well vnderstood, and applyed of vs, we shall be able (by his grace) to frame more comfortable premisses, and to goe forward in this *divine disceptation*, with consideration of those further things, the conclusion and inference whereof, will minister vnto vs yet *more courage*, to cleave vnto the Lord in the communion of his *Saints*.

For why? the former argument was taken from the *miseries, grievances, persecutions, and oppressions* of Gods people, and yet it is powerfull, and able to conclude, both a *necessitie*, (and includeth also an *excellency*) of our

sepa-

separation from sinners, to become of that number who are so happie, in their very misery: but this latter may be taken from the graces of the same men, from whose distresses alone, we reasoned before; and for the further wooing, and faster glewing of vs vnto the heavenly corporation, of such as are happily incorporated into Christ Iesus, it may (in the second place) be fram'd thus.

If the *worst* of Gods people, *viz.* their troubles, miseries, and oppressions, be such as doe exceede all the well-being of other men, if in their *grievances* and vexations, it goe so well with them, how happie must these men be considered in their *graces*, and the employment of them? if their bitter sorrowes be so *sweete*, how will the *sweete sap*, and favour of Gods spirit taste, and relish in them? if out of crueltie, tyranny, and all manner of evill so much good may issue, when they have to doe with wicked and vnreasonable men, who can conceiue the consolation that shall accrew vnto them, in the free and peaceable exercise of their graces, wherein they deale onely with Gods owne Maiestie, and such of their fellow-brethren and sisters, as are truely gracious with themselues? If the troubled waters, which are so muddyed with the foule fruit of *Satans*, and mens malice, may yelde such joy, what will flow from the blessed influence of God himselfe thinke yee, when he shall leade them to those Welles of salvation, whence they shall *draw freely*, and *drinke their fill*, of those pure christall stremes, which himselfe hath distilled? Surely every man must needs (in all reason) thinke, that if their *worst estate* of grieve and misery be *so good*, this of grace and peace, cannot but be *better*, and yeld sweeter fruit then the former; & so the *best estate* of a wicked man

being so farre behinde their *worst*, must needs be much more behind this, and vtterly incomparable there-vnto.

And yet, though this be much, the *most*, and *best* of all, is yet to come, viz: their state of *glory*, which shall be the reward both of their *grievances*, and *graces* alio; and from that, a man whose heart were set aright, might *lastly* reason thus.

These men (*Gods Saints*) were happier then I, at the *worst* of their miseries, even in the midst of their enemies; They were yet more happy then so, when with their *God*, and with each other among themselues, they might peaceably vse their *graces*; the least of these two, was more then a little beyond my *best*: But their *best* of all, being yet to come, *to wit*, their *blessednes* and *glory* in heaven, with the *God* of heaven; what shall I conceiue of their inconceivable felicitie, then and there? and how infinitely vnhappy am I, that am so short of the *good* they haue, in their *very euill*? and am not yet so farre, as to be equall with them in their meanest, and most afflicted condition? Surely it being so well with them in their *grievances*; it cannot but be much better with them in their *graces*, and *best* of all, in their *glory*. O the hydden (*yet heavenly*) estate of these holy ones; which is so heauenly, that it must be *hidden*, there being no possibility on earth to reveale it. Who would be out of that state, wherein is so much excellency, that every *euill* therein, is exceeding *god*, and every *good* exceedeth each other? If a mans heart be not chained to the *Diuell*, and by the *Diuell*, to the *world*, to be kept here, in that perpetuall *pryson* of infidelity, and *profaness*, which will bring him to that *perdition* which is due there unto; hee cannot but be drawne out of himselfe, and his sinfull state, with this *three-fold sorde*, and be tyed fast for ever (as one enamoured

Or, The faithfulls Well-fare.

ted and enflamed) to the Lord God, in th. fellowship of
thoile his *Saints*, who having beeene faithfull before him
hecre, (both in doing his will, an ^{Agg'ing for the same})
have now received the wages, ^{of} *eternall life*, ^{of} *eternall felicitie*, ^{of} *eternall
fayre* in the Kingdome forwaide which they ^{are} hereu, where-
in they shall see *him* as he ^{is}, and with him, ^{is} blesed ^{1 John 3.2.}
Sonre, his eternall *spirit*, his belov'd *Saints*, in that life
and immortality, blisse, and felicitie, which God who is
faithfull, hath performed to them, promised to vs, and to all
the rest of his *holie* ones, keeping them, who are already
in actual possession, not aboluteley perfect (as being yet
wilfull ^{vs}), till we shal be brought vnto them, and both
they, and we, (and all the elect) vnto the Lord our God,
at the las^t day, to be co^rplete in that enti^re, and eter-
nall ^{re} *glory*, the *hope* ^{whereof}, gues vs hart,
and m^{an}nes^t vayte, and ligh in our soules, looking and
longing for th^t gloriouse appearance of his, which shall
make vs to appeare in glory with him, for ever and ever.

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